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THE ROLE OF ALTERNATIVE FOOD NETWORKS IN AGRICULTURAL
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION: SOME EVIDENCES FROM ITALY AND
SPAIN.

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*To my beloved mother
my immortal shelter and consolation:
you will love me through the eyes of God
I will love you in my memories.*

S.

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Abstract

Drawing on the vast literature about Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) and by utilizing the concepts of social, spatial and ecological embeddedness, this thesis studies the driving forces boosting the AFN farmers' behaviours in the Community of Madrid and the AFN and conventional farmers in Sardinia, as well as the promotion of AFN practices within the rural parks of Rivas-Vaciamadrid (Spain) and Milan (Italy). The aim is to discover if, and to what extent, landscape and environmental protection goals are embedded in individual AFN and conventional practices, and how practices are promoted in spatial planning projects regarding alternative forms of production.

The case studies are based on the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews: 13 producers in Spain and 25 in Sardinia (including organic and conventional ones), and on the analysis of websites promoting farms belonging to the Soto del Grillo agro-ecological Park in Rivas-Vaciamadrid (7 websites) and the Parco Agricolo Sud in Milan (14 websites).

Within the Grounded Theory (GT) framework, codification and saturation methods have been chosen to analyse texts and to determine the sample size. Sampling has been conducted by the non-statistic snowball sampling technique. Codification method allows deeply analysing textual contents and to build a theoretical model describing the case study, by disassembling texts into basic ideas and reassembling them in more general categories. The relationship among categories forms the final theory or model. In the study, the behaviours of Spanish and Sardinian farmers are described through "embeddedness styles" characterised by the way in which categories interplay. In both the case studies, economy and ecology play a different balance within the behaviours, completed by other categories that influence farmers' insights and practices. Every producer has been included just in one category according to her/his main preference, which does not imply the absence of a positive attitude towards other categories.

Websites contents have been analysed by drawing on *geographical lores* (or *knowledges*), which have been modified in order to adapt them to the case studies. *Geographical lores* allow classifying promotional material contents according to the concept of *displacement*, describing which type of information is used to influence purchasing decisions.

Finally, a questionnaire based on the values promoted by the two rural parks has been provided to seven of the 18 Sardinian farmers, in order to discover their attitude towards planning regulations and restrictions related to rural development, rural landscape preservation and environmental protection.

Results show how the three types of embeddedness (spatial, ecological and social) work in forming the farmers' behaviours, and if and to what extent these are influenced by the territorial context where farmers live and work, as for example in the case of the Soto del Grillo Park in the Spanish case. *Geographical lores* from the websites stress the way of promoting the farms and the agricultural activities, indicating which values are considered more useful to influence consumers' decisions.

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List of acronyms

AEMs: Agri-Environment Measures

AFNs: Alternative Food Networks

ANT: Actor Network Theory

CAEM: Comité de Agricultura Ecológica de la Comunidad de Madrid

CAP: Common Agricultural Policy

CDO: Controlled Denomination of Origin

CSA: Community Supported Agriculture

DESR: Distretto di Economia Solidale del Parco Agricolo Sud

DO: Denomination of Origin

ECP: European Cohesion Policy

ELC: European Landscape Convention

SPG: Solidarity Purchasing Groups

GCDO: Guaranteed and Controlled Designated of Origin

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GT: Grounded Theory

GVA: Gross Value Added

IFOAM: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

IOBC: International Organisation of Biological Control

MFA: Multi-Functional Agriculture

NEPFs: Naturally-Embedded Food Products

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PGI: Protected Geographical Indication

PDO: Protected Designation of Origin

PGS: Participatory Guarantee System

PTC: Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento

PSA: Piano di Settore Agricolo

RDP: Rural Development Programme

RDR: Rural Development Regulation

RES: Renewable Energy Sources

TGI: Traditional Guaranteed Specialities

ZEPA: Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves

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Introduction

This work, which results from four years of research through both fieldwork and deskwork, aims to discover existing and potential connections between spatial planning for agriculture landscape preservation and multifunctional agriculture practices within Alternative Food Networks (AFNs).

Indeed, whereas in the 1970s the food system was conceived mainly as a rural problem and framed in productivist terms, during the years has been gaining more and more political significance (Morgan, 2014), because of its implications on economy, urban-rural boundaries, and food security (Winter, 2006). Morgan (2014) gathers all these implications into the *multifunctional* character of food.

Thus, food is no longer perceived as a marginal issue in the mainstream political discourse (Morgan & Sonnino, 2010), but it has acquired visibility and salience at the global and local levels both in rural and urban areas, also due to the confluence of rapid urbanisation and the new food equation (Morgan & Sonnino, 2010). Its *multifunctional* character makes it a unique political phenomenon; food systems are heavily implicated in many public policy arenas (Morgan, 2014).

In this context, in the last decades AFNs have become a widespread phenomenon signalling a shift away from the mainstream, commoditised, and anomic conventional food supply. However, their alterity should not be conceived as a radical opposition to the conventional food supply, with which they co-exist, trying to make changes from the inside of the mainstream (Goodman, Dupuis, & Goodman, 2011). Among their characteristics of alterity, re-localisation of food is considered an important aspect for rural development and for local products empowerment; promoting the territory as a brand is a socio-cultural construct that boosts food characterisation (Sonnino, 2007). Acquiring knowledge about the origin of products in order to make strategic consumption choices, besides an answer to the search of healthy nutrition and sustainable agriculture, could work as an economic pillar for rural as well as peri-urban and urban realities. Particularly, local food promotion is linked to gastronomic tourism; experiencing a place through food means becoming part of the culture symbolised by it (Bessi re, 1998), thus working as an attractive factor for the place where it originates from.

AFNs play a big role in landscape preservation and biodiversity improvement and protection (Kvakkestad et al., 2015; Simoncini, 2015). Indeed, for long time conceived as a stranger to the planning field (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000), the food system is now perceived as a prism through which planners seek to promote sustainable natural resource management and Ecosystem Services (Morgan, 2014). Cultural and social role of AFNs should be considered strategic in the light of the Landscape European Convention (ELC) and Ecosystem Services principles.

The emergence of AFNs is commonly conceptualized as a *quality turn* (Goodman, 2003) in food production. Nevertheless, quality remains a negotiable and contested concept that is always open for interpretation and

appropriation (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006), whose meaning is embedded in its specific production–consumption context (Ilbery & Kneafsey, 2000). Quality does not refer exclusively to the properties of the food itself, but also to the way the properties have been achieved and how they reflect different interests, agendas, and values (Morris & Young, 2000).

The thesis explores of the complex relationship between food production quality, agricultural system, and environmental and landscape protection. To reach this goal, a comparison between three realities belonging to two European Countries – Italy and Spain – has been designed and developed. The fieldwork has been implemented through in-depth interviews from the Community of Madrid and Sardinia, in order to describe the driving forces forming the behaviour of farmers belonging to AFNs. The concept of embeddedness (Polanyi, 1944; Granovetter, 1985; Penker, 2006; Morris & Kirwan, 2011) has been used as a theoretical point of reference.

For the deskwork, two rural parks have been studied and are presented as best practices through the websites analysis of farms enrolled in specific projects. The analysis aims to highlight which values typical of AFNs are used in promoting local food, linking it to multifunctional agricultural activities that have landscape conservation and enhancement among their scopes.

Finally, a second set of interviews realised in Sardinia, with a specific focus on potential planning activities, have been designed to discover which could be the behavioural barriers to a hypothetical creation of a rural park in this region.

The thesis addresses the following research questions:

- i) does embeddedness exist among AFNs farmers in Sardinia and in the community of Madrid? How and to what extent does embeddedness influence agricultural and selling practices (whether or not related to food production) and the commonly-shared vision related to official and non-official quality certifications?
- ii) could spatial planning effectively take advantage of AFNs values for the conservation, enhancement, and promotion of agricultural landscapes?
- iii) could synergies between quality food production and quality of places be built and managed by planning bodies?
- iv) does farmers' embeddedness correspond to a positive attitude towards the establishment of rural parks, protected areas, etc?

The thesis is structured as follows: after the introduction, a literature review about AFNs is presented in order to explain how they have been studied until now. Then, the methodology used for interviews and websites analysis is described. Next, two case studies are presented, which are particularly significant with reference to the implementation of the theoretical concepts of the research discussion in the thesis. Finally, results are presented and discussed for each topic: the comparison between the community of Madrid and Sardinia

regarding the farmers' embeddedness and the lessons learnt by the rural parks of Madrid and Milan, are used in order to make the final considerations for the Sardinian case.

Chapter 1: Literature review

This chapter proposes an analytical discussion on the scientific literature concerning AFNs.

In the first section, the origin and nature of AFNs is presented, focusing on classifications that explain the diverse ways of working according to the spatial and temporal relationships among producers and consumers. Consumers' involvements related to such relations is described as well. Then, the three main points of view AFNs are analysed and assessed, political economy, rural sociology, and governance, are described. The next section will show a brief overview of the evolution of agriculture in Europe, under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) framework. Due to the change in the CAP goals –from productivism to environmental sustainability of food production-, the connection between the current research themes concerning AFNs and possible future lines of research about the integration in planning theories and practices, of which this thesis wants to be a contribution are also presented. Theoretical explanations about the evolution of the landscape conceptualisation in Europe, from the late XIX century to the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in the year 2000, are described. Then, recent contributions to the integration of multifunctional agriculture¹ (MFA) into landscape protection and biodiversity improvement are presented, together with some considerations about the lack of integration of different landscape management scales to the new CAP 2014-2020.

The final section presents a discussion on recent scientific contributions to the role of AFNs in biodiversity improvement and landscape management will close the chapter.

1.1 Alternative Food Networks: an overview

It is difficult to give a precise definition of AFNs. In fact, despite the vast literature related to this issue, they are defined not so much what they are as about they are not (Tregear, 2011). However, some definitions are useful in order to understand how AFNs work; Renting, Banks, & Marsden (2003, p. 394) describe them as “newly emerging networks of producers, consumers, and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised industrial mode of food supply”. Sonnino & Marsden' (2006, p. 181) position on this question is explained as follows: “a shift away from the industrialized and conventional food sector, towards a re-localized food and farming regime”. AFNs started to develop in the nineties as a response to different issues related to food security and safety: OGM negative effects, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and avian influenza (Goodman, 2003), and the strong preference for a responsible nutrition, which has produced a change in the values consumers pay attention to in their food choice. In fact, if in the conventional market

¹ MFA is defined as the complex of agricultural practices able to produce effects not related to food production, such as biodiversity, “natural resources management, landscape and biodiversity conservation and contribution to the socio-economic viability of rural areas” (Renting, et al., 2009, p. S112).

the choice is more on price and product quality, in alternative food markets the way of how food is produced is important, as well (Carvalho de Rezende, 2013). According to the mechanism these markets work, different values can be identified on the reference to the discussion proposed above; environmental protection for organic food, re-connection with the place of production in the case of local food, and social improvement in fair-trade movements (Carvalho de Rezende, 2013). Such values are not mutually exclusive, but can coexist; the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), for example, bases organic agriculture on four principles: health, ecology, care (that is, sustainability), and fairness. If the first three are, in some way, related to the environment, the fourth expresses values typical of fair-trade movements: “those involved in Organic Agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties - farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and consumers. Organic Agriculture should provide everyone involved with a good quality of life, and contribute to food sovereignty and reduction of poverty. It aims to produce a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products” (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, 2011).

AFNs can be classified according to their spatial and temporal dimensions, and the *quality relations* that characterise their otherness respect to the conventional market (Renting, Banks, & Marsden, 2003). About the first classification, AFNs can be divided (table 1) into: i) face-to-face interaction, ii) relations of proximity, and iii) extended relations.

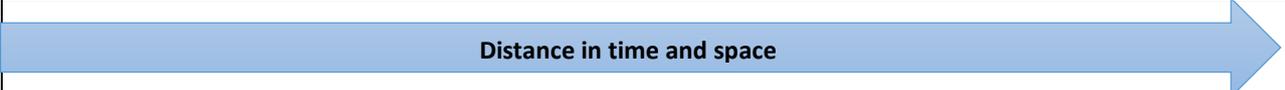
Face-to-face AFNs	Proximate AFNs	Extended AFNs
Distance in time and space 		
Farm shops Roadside stands Farmers’ markets Pick your own Box schemes Home deliver Mail orders e-shopping	Farms shop groups Regional hallmarks Consumers cooperatives Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Thematic routes Special events (fairies)	Certification labels Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) Denomination of Origin (DO) Fair Trade

Table 1: types of AFNs according to time and spatial distance. Source: Author

The AFNs of the first category imply that personal relations between producers and consumers build trust in the exchange process; to this category belong farmers’ markets, farm shops, *pick-your-own* farms, roadside

stands. That is, all types of direct sales (Higgins, Dibden, & Cocklin, 2008). Other methods, like box schemes, e-mail orders or e-shopping can also be included in this category (Renting, Banks, & Marsden, 2003).

Proximate AFNs are based on more complex networks, because of a larger distance in time and space; in this case, relationships go beyond direct selling and are based on *spatial proximity* (Renting, Banks, & Marsden, 2003), which very often remains inside regional dimension. Due to these characteristics, in this case the guarantee of the products can be given by intermediate suppliers. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), regional hallmarks and consumers cooperatives are examples of Proximate AFNs.

The third proposed category of table 1, implies that products are sold outside of the territory of origin; here, there are no relationships between producers and consumers, and the trust is generated by institutional conventions like DO certification, organic and fair trade labels.

These three categories are not mutually exclusive, since their AFNs are very often mixed in the single farms (Renting, Banks, & Marsden, 2003, p. 399).

Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine (2008) describe two types of consumers involvement according to the nature of the AFNs: delegation and empowerment. The first is a set of market mechanisms according to which consumers' trust is generated by labels or hallmarks. Thus, the exchange process is very similar to the one typical of conventional food chains; buyers do not play the role of quality controllers, delegating this function to the certification bodies. In this way, their action consists only in choosing the products during their normal purchases.

On the contrary in the empowerment regime, the trust is built with *ad hoc* mechanisms (Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine, 2008), which usually are agreements between producers and buyers, according to which the choice is made collectively with the participation of consumers. It is clear that the two regimes are based on the concept of time and distance described before (table 2), and that empowerment corresponds to face-to-face AFNs, whereas delegation is typical of Extended AFNs. As the types of AFNs can be mixed up, the same happens for the regimes; as noted by Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine (2008, p. 63), "between these two very specific positions, most consumers adopt intermediary behaviour, combining delegation and at certain times, participation in collective choices about production and consumption".

Face-to-face AFNs	Proximate AFNs	Extended AFNs
Farm shops Roadside stands Farmers' markets Pick your own Box schemes Home deliver Mail orders e-shopping	Farms shop groups Regional hallmarks Consumers cooperatives Community supported agriculture Thematic routes Special events (fairies)	Certification labels PGI, DO Fair Trade

Table 2: empowerment vs delegation regime related to AFNs types. Source: Author

1.2 The three research lines about AFNs

1.2.1 Political economy

Scientific research on AFNs is commonly divided into three perspectives (Simoncini, 2015; Tregear, 2011). The first approach, based on political economy, has the scope of investigating the role played by AFNs actors at the micro-level, in order to discover how they contrast the anomic, capitalistic conventional market. This perspective, which draws upon Marxist theories, uses the concept of embeddedness as a conceptual framework. Karl Polanyi in 1944 defined the embeddedness as the degree to which non-economic (politic, religious, and social) institutions use to influence economy in pre-industrial societies, and criticised classical economists (especially Malthus and Ricardo) who believed that economy is dis-embedded from society and markets can completely self-regulate. Polanyi considered Malthus and Ricardo's views as utopian. In 1985, Granovetter came back to the concept of embeddedness, demonstrating the existence of embeddedness in capitalist societies and its importance as a theoretical tool in order to study how society influences economic phenomena. Arguing that economy in the food sector is influenced by natural as well as social relations, Murdoch, Marsden & Banks (2000), introduced the concept of embeddedness within the rural studies.

Some scientific works have systematised the concepts of embeddedness; after highlighting the fuzziness of the term as it is used in the agro-food literature, Penker (2006) describes three types of embeddedness: i) social, ii) spatial, and iii) ecological.

The first refers to the relationship between economic activities and the social background, focusing on how the actors belonging to the network (producers and consumers, in particular) relate among them, how trust mechanisms are generated and how they develop. Some types of AFNs are investigated in the light of social embeddedness, for example fair trade systems.

Spatial embeddedness is related to concepts of localness and food origin. Thus, the investigated themes are the customers' awareness of the territory where the food is produced, the shortening of food chains, and labels of origin.

Ecological embeddedness is based on the influence of environmental beliefs and practices on production activities, such as avoiding the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers. For this reason, studies about this concepts are often focused on organic production and Agro-environmental Measures (AEM).

Embeddedness has been often used as synonym of alterity, meaning that many AFNs studies assert that every alternative system of food provision is embedded, and vice versa the embeddedness ensure the nature of being alternative. This position has been criticised by many scholars; Hinrichs (2000) highlights the contrast that some literature creates between conventional and alternative food markets, quoting (Block, 1990) concepts of marketness in opposition to embeddedness. According to her, many scholars have emphasised peculiar aspects of social embeddedness, overlooking evidences of marketness and instrumentalism showed by actors belonging to AFNs. A similar objection is made by Sonnino (2007), who criticises the false contrast between alternative (localised and embedded) and conventional (globalised and dis-embedded) food networks. In reality, as Hinrichs (2000) argues, "rarely embeddedness stands in diametric opposition to marketness and instrumentalism" (Hinrichs, 2000, p. 297). Winter (2003) affirms that "we cannot equate 'alternativeness' with embeddedness in a deterministic manner" (Winter, 2003). Finally, Penker (2006) not only states that every food chain is embedded, noting that the point is not to establish the existence of embeddedness but its degree and way of manifesting within the economic activity, but also demonstrates the co-existence of social, spatial and ecological embeddedness.

De-commoditisation of food can be included in this field. Commoditisation is defined as the economic process according to which goods that are distinguishable (for example, manufactured goods, or food) become, in the market, undistinguishable – thus, they are subjected to a homogenisation process. In the market, these goods become brands, and create perfect competition (Daviron & Vagneron, 2011). According to some scholars, re-localisation of food and direct relationships with farmers may possibly to de-commoditise food (Daviron & Vagneron, 2011)

1.2.2 Rural sociology

This line, as the previous one, focuses on AFNs in juxtaposition to conventional, mainstream, anomic markets, but drawing upon different theories rather than Marxism, and highlighting the role of AFNs in rural and local communities' development (Tregear, 2011). Again, social embeddedness is used here in order to describe the "cultural, historical, and socio-economic characteristics of a rural area" (Simoncini, 2015, p. 356). Also this strand uses micro-level investigation, for example through in-depth interviews to farmers or description of local-embedded food networks. The concepts of marketness and instrumentalism are used by (Morris & Kirwan, 2011b) in their study about the styles of ecological engagement of meat and cheese producers all around the UK; the five styles identified by the authors are characterised by increasing levels of instrumentalism, and this affects rural development in terms of food promotion (Morris & Kirwan, 2011b). In fact, the lack of transmission of ecological values conceived by farmers, who play a role of *ecological entrepreneurs* (Marsden & Smith, 2005), could dissuade other actors in imitating such practices.

These studies focus on the cultural dimension of food; for example (Sage, 2003) discusses the concept of *good food* and the definition of the term *quality* as perceived in such networks; in his view, quality can be defined through three main attributes: i) intrinsic characteristics (such as taste, texture, and so on); ii) ecologically embedded characteristics, related to the place of production and the cultivation methods, and iii) the social structures related to the alternative modes of production and distribution. These *alternative* characteristics of food are partially responsible for the growing importance of these modes of supply throughout Europe in the last decades (Higgins, Dibden, & Cocklin, 2008). The cultural dimension of food is also related to tourist experiences, that can contribute to rural development in supporting all the activities, not related to food production, conducted by farmers; in fact, as highlighted by (Bessière, 1998), rural areas show a significant growth as tourist and leisure attractions, where food plays an important role in local gastronomy, according to the incorporation principle; through eating local products, tourists assimilate the characteristics of the two natures of food, from the nutritional, cultural and identity-making points of view. In this sense, guarantee of quality and generation of trust, also through quality labels, assumes a fundamental role for the valorisation of rural areas (Bessière, 1998).

Speaking about localness, according to (Fonte, 2008), this concept is important in order to differentiate the evolution of AFNs and, then, how they influence rural development. Fonte identifies two perspectives: "reconnection" and "origin of food". The first is typical of Anglo-Saxon countries and aims to re-establish strong relationships between producers and consumers, which have been demolished by the anomic capitalist market. Selling methods such as farmers' markets, CSA, and food policy councils are typical of this perspective. These initiatives normally take place in the so-called *food deserts* or *placeless foodscapes* (Morgan & Sonnino, 2010). That is, places where cheap and healthy food is unavailable for the majority of people (Wrigley, 2002), or where there is no space available for local food production.

The second perspective is typical of Mediterranean countries, where culture about food production and consumption is not completely destroyed by conventional agriculture and supermarkets, but underwent marginalisation processes. In this strand, instruments such as DO have grown in the last decades, in order to recuperate traditional products and promote rural development (marginalisation was caused also by countryside depopulation). According to Fonte (2008), within the *origin of food* perspective the concept of *local* does not only embrace geographical distance, but also includes temporal dimension that, through traditions and cultural heritage, forms the sense of territory.

1.2.3 Governance

In the third strand of scientific research about AFNs, the two previously analysed general issues are mixed up, with the aim of studying AFNs as social constructions (Tregear, 2011). Sometimes, geographical economy and Actor Network Theory (ANT) are used as theoretical tools in order to understand the food networks work. Being the scope to “identify the[ir] historical, territorial, social, cultural, institutional ‘ingredients’ and scales of governance” (Simoncini, 2015, p. 356) at the meso-level, meaning at the regional or state level (Tregear, 2011). Studies within this strand allow to properly analyse AFNs evolution and their characteristics. Researches about certifications the practices typical of standards could be included in this research line, albeit considering a different point of view (Tregear, 2011).

Under this perspective line, studies like Brunori & Rossi’s (2000) offer an interesting exploration of wine routes in Tuscany, drawing upon the concept of collective actions, that is, the creation of alliances between producers and other actors that are able to “mobilize social relations to improve their economic performance and create new opportunities for growth” (Brunori & Rossi, 2000, p. 409). A wine route can be defined as “a network established around a theme: the landscape of wine” (p. 410). According to the authors, the power of single farmers’ actions progressively diminishes according to the level of the tourist experience (table 3). More specifically, farmers have the ability to influence the tourists’ experience only in the last two levels (trying culinary specialities and visit the wine cellar), whereas collective action can effectively determine

	Silence, Landscape and Heritage
	Visit to a wine-information centre
	Shopping
	<i>Trying culinary specialities</i>
	<i>Visit the wine cellar</i>

Table 3: tourist experience and single farmers' power in wine routes. Source: author's work upon Brunori & Rossi (2000)

changes in the other dimensions. This for sure has consequences in the rural development, because collective actions have the power to influence the demand for typical products and, by doing so, improve and modify the region's reputation (Brunori & Rossi, 2000) increasing economic benefits of current farms, and giving new possibilities for businesses.

1.2.4 Some critiques

AFNs have been also largely criticised, above all from the point of view of an exacerbated positive position towards them by scientific community.

One of the points that are most criticised is the binary opposition between alternative and conventional, very often associated with dualistic categorisation such as "old and new, crisis and rupture, modernization and alternative" (Goodman, 2003). Beyond the false opposition between conventional and alternative food chains, due to the fact that "alternative networks do not operate in isolation" (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006, p. 191), this binary contrast in the literature is often associated with a naïf positive attitude towards AFNs. On one hand, this generates a dangerous simplification of the analyses, which lack of awareness of the phenomenon complexity, for example ignoring its "uneven spatial and temporal intensity" (Goodman, 2003, p. 10) and addressing generation of quality to marginal agriculture, realising a simplistic conceiving of the complex sets of value that define quality (Winter, 2003).

On the other hand, even if embeddedness is a useful tool to discover the relationships between food production and territory (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006), its *romantic* use can dangerously produce an uncritical positive attitude towards the social character of AFNs (Sayer, 2001; Goodman, 2003). One of the risks of this attitude is that negative characteristics of AFNs could be not recognised and assessed by scientific literature, as some internal contradictions. Lotti (2010), for example, highlighted discrepancies between the declared intention and the actual practices of movements such Slow Food.

Localness is another conflicting concept. Many scholars warn about the so-called *local trap* (Born & Purcell, 2006; Edwards-Jones, et al., 2008). Local-embedded food systems, indeed, do not generate the same effects on food democracy anywhere, instead producing inequalities and elitarian food distribution in some case studies (Born & Purcell, 2006). Moreover, solutions proposed under the "unreflexive localism" (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005, p. 360) can be weak within the market and be cooptated by big corporations and retailers (Guthman, 2014).

Finally, positive attitudes towards the ecologic character of local systems of provision are argued by Edwards-Jones, et al. (2008), showing how food miles are insufficient to assess the environmental impact of food.

Standards are also contested for their growing resemblance to conventional market mechanism. As Daviron & Vagneron (2011) argue, whereas sustainability standards such as organic agriculture and fair-trade systems

at first contributed to de-commoditise agricultural products, contrasting the “opacity between the upper and lower parts of the chain” (p. 92) that characterise conventional food chains, in recent years they have enhanced the development of the phenomenon of substitutability of products, thus re-creating the commoditisation they had before used to contrast. However, it is also true that the conventional food chains have contributed to the commoditisation of organic products due to their inclusion within supermarkets, sometimes with their own labels (Daviron & Vagneron, 2011).

1.3 The agriculture in Europe: a historical overview

1.3.1 CAP: from past to present

A brief historical overview of the CAP helps better understanding the evolution of agriculture practices in Europe. Moreover, as it is explained later, the environmental shift of the CAP during the years is very important in the role that AFNs play in landscape protection and improvement.

The CAP is the European Policy that absorbs most of the financial resources of the EU; about the 45% of the whole EU budget (European Commission, 2014) is dedicated to it. The origin of the CAP can be placed after World War II, when agricultural production was weakened and there was the necessity to supply more food at a cheap price. For this reason, the early CAP was production-oriented and had the aim to regulate and support prices paid by farmers in order to stabilise the market (European Commission, 2015). In the early Sixties, the European Community was founded, which established a common market and a CAP within it. Ten years later, in the Seventies, CAP focused on shaping the structure of the agricultural sector, for example making the retirement of older farmers easier, and supporting agricultural production in disadvantaged areas. Within these years, the first signals of overproduction started to appear (European Commission, History of the CAP, 2015). Overproduction became a chronic issue during the Eighties, for many types of products. The Commission put in place some measures to contrast the problem (for example, milk quotas in 1984), but with consequences on economical world markets, and problems of unpopularity among farmers, who were often penalised by these regulations. At the same time, questions about the sustainability of agriculture started to make people aware of environmental problems caused by overexploitation generated by food production. Due to growing expenditure for funding, and to increasing protest against the excessive protectionism of the CAP (Daugbjerg, 2003), In 1992 the CAP was subjected to its first, big reform, named after the European Commissary for the agriculture that promoted it, Ray MacSharry. The reform set forth the shift from direct prices support toward farmers' income support, in so projecting the CAP towards a system of economic competition. Some environmental measures (as the agri-environmental programmes) were also created, establishing payments for those farmers who decided voluntarily to engage themselves in practising methods based on environmental and landscape protection.

The Agenda 2000 reform built on the modifications introduced by the MacSharry reform, and moved towards a more environmentally-oriented CAP and towards financial supports for farmers' income instead of production (Meijl & van Tongeren, 2002). Among other things, it established the creation of a rural development policy, that constitutes Pillar Two of the CAP (in addition to Pillar One, which supports production). The Regulation of the European Parliament and Council 1999/1257, known as Rural Development Regulation (RDR) established that every Member State has to draft a Rural Development Programme, a document containing measures aimed to improve the quality of life in rural regions, most of them environmentally-oriented: i) maintenance and promotion of low-input farming systems; ii)

preservation and promotion of high nature values and sustainable agriculture, in order to follow environmental requirements; iii) encouragement of non-food production; and iv) sustainable forest development (Gay, Osterburg, & Zdanowicz, 2005).

In 2003, a profound renovation was implemented. The Fishler reform sanctioned the end of production support, introducing the decoupling instrument. Instead of giving payments based on the production amount, a single payment is given to a farmer based on the environmental measures he/she adopts (regarding animal welfare, food safety, and the maintenance of good environmental conditions) (European Commission, Agriculture and environment, 2015). Fischler reform has been largely criticised in scientific literature, especially for being a causation of land abandonment, due to the introduction of the decoupling (Latruffe & Davidova, 2007; Breen, Hennessy, & Thorne, 2005), in so highlighting a sort of internal contradiction regarding its general goal, that is environmental improvement.

Fishler reform was also related to other measures, such as regulations concerning specific products (such as sugar, fruit and vegetable, and wine). Modulation was also established, which consisted in moving shares of the economic budget from Pillar I to Pillar II, through the reduction of payments to large farms (Swinnen, 2008).

1.3.2 The post-2013 CAP

A new, deeply reformed CAP has been proposed for the seven years from 2014 to 2020; the environmental focus is becoming the crucial element of the policy (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2015). A land-based approach, instead of the previous production financial support, is given as the new pivotal concept of the CAP (European Commission, Overview of CAP Reform 2014-2020, 2013). The need of the CAP reform comes from three factors external to the agro-food sector: i) economic; ii) environmental; and iii) territorial. With reference to the first questions like food security, decreasing production, and price volatility are concerned. Soil and water quality and biodiversity are included in the second, whereas territorial issues are related to rural areas demography and social development (European Commission, 2013, p. 2).

Six priorities are highlighted: i) innovation in agriculture; ii) competitiveness of farms; iii) promotion of well organised food networks; iv) restoration and preservation of agro-forestry ecosystems; v) promotion of RES in agricultural and forestry production; and vi) social inclusion in rural areas (European Commission, 2013, p. 9).

Although some questions about the current legitimacy of the Pillar One were highlighted in the discussion on the reform (Hart & Baldock, 2011), the new CAP maintains the two Pillars, even though it improves their technical connection, through the introduction of a new instrument, the Green Direct Payment (GDP), in the Pillar One. The GDP is based on the compulsory respect of three agricultural practices: i) maintenance of permanent grasslands; ii) ecological focus areas; and iii) crop diversification (European Commission,

Overview of CAP Reform 2014-2020, 2013). According to the Commission, this compulsoriness “has the advantage of introducing practices that are beneficial for the environment and climate on most of the utilised agricultural area” (European Commission, 2013, p. 7).

Some critiques have been raised against the new CAP, its shift to a more environmental-oriented focus and its weak role in agricultural landscape preservation.

Erjavec & Erjavec (2015), using critical discourse analysis, highlights some criticism within the new CAP documents. Three main types of discourses has been found: i) productivist (or neo-mercantilist); ii) multi-functional; and iii) neo-liberal. The authors define the new CAP as “a new hybrid policy” (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2015, p. 53), even though in their view some parts are dominated by just one type of discourse. For example, the goal of granting food security is related to a productivist discourse, and in this perspective, the new CAP should favour intervention of politics in agricultural production due to a strong influence of conservative States Members such as Spain, France and Ireland (p. 60); the green direct payments, instead, show a multi-functional discourse and imply an important budget dedication - a 30% of the national direct payment envelope (European Commission, 2013). In the rural development and social inclusion goal, the discourse is also hybrid, being founded on neo-liberal ideas (the improvement of competitiveness), and it implies some multi-functional justifications. As a conclusion, the *greening of the CAP* actually appears as a re-formulation of key discourses with emphasis on “popular environmental aspects” and that “contemporary agricultural politics does not rely on a direct relationship between aims and measures but, rather, employs different discourses to justify policies” (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2015, p. 60). In fact, reference to environmental questions are present in all the discourses, but there is no proportion between measures and budget assignment.

However, in the study the non-stop progress of the CAP reform is stressed, considering that the inclusion of the European Parliament in the decision-making mechanism has modified the balances among interested actors.

The history of the CAP is reported schematically in the table 4.

Early years	70s and 80s	MacSharry reform (1992)	Agenda 2000	Fischler reform (2003)	The new CAP 2014-2020
Prices support	Production surplus	farmers' income support	Deepening MacSharry reform aims	Decoupling	Greening
Production improvement	Support in disadvantaged areas	Agri-environment Measures	Rural Development Pillar	Cross compliance	Social inclusion
Stabilisation of the market	Shaping of farms structure	Surplus reduction		Environment	Food chain and food security
				Shift to Rural Development	Innovation

Table 4: CAP milestones.

Source: author's work upon http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-history/early-years/index_en.htm. Accessed: November 2015

1.3.3 AFNs and planning: a new rural development tool?

After the historical focus on the evolution of the CAP, it is worth to present some reflections about the concept of landscape, its evolution during the years (with a particular focus on Italy), and the role of agriculture in shaping and managing it.

The ELC, established in Florence in the year 2000, has merged two concepts of landscape: the landscape conceived as *natural beauty*, typical of the aesthetical and recreational approach of the XIX and the early XX centuries (Silvestri, 2004), and the structural approach typical of the landscape ecology (scientific-conservationist approach). The former approach is related to the establishment of protected areas in France and in the United States in the XIX Century. Even though some differences are evident as regards the motivations of protecting natural spaces (recognition of anthropic pressure in Europe, need of cultural national references in order to mend the divisions deriving from the Civil War in the United States), however the pivotal motif was the recognition of places that have special characters deriving from their beauty or singularity (Silvestri, 2004). In other words, landscapes were conceived as effects of the nature, totally excluding human intervention (Santos y Ganges, 2003). The latter, still excluding human pressure, is based on the landscape ecology and a more scientific and objective vision than *natural beauty*, whose aim was the deterministic investigation about natural processes, in order to understand them and finally to manage and protect them from the impacts caused by human activity (Beltrame, 2009).

The ELC has recognised the inconsistency of the concept which considers landscape as disjointed from local societies (De Montis, 2014), bestowing it “a meaning, a dimension, and a function that is mainly cultural (and then historical), able to give sense and significance to our living and set ourselves in the environment” (Beltrame, 2009, p. 7). The landscape is defined by the ELC as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors” (ELC, 2000, art. 1).

Agriculture has a big impact on the landscape shaping (Lefebvre, et al., 2014) and the environment, because farming practices both exploit and affect natural resources (Deffontaines, Thenail, & Baudry, 1995). On the other hand, landscape is considered the physical context where the interaction between production practices and social and natural capitals do occur (Benoit, et al., 2012).

Many studies have addressed the problem of how to integrate farms management and landscape planning (Deffontaines et al., 1995; Goldman et al., 2007; Lovell et al., 2010; Benoit et al., 2012; Lefebvre et al., 2014; Kvakkestad et al., 2015). Some of them focus their attention on the concept of scale and its application on landscape and farm management. Benoit et al. (2012) put in evidence the need for an enlargement of the spectrum of analyses from single farms to a more comprehensive level; in fact, if the *classic* focus on the farm level links practices to ecology, the conception of landscape management level implies the influence of “socioeconomic and cultural factors” (Benoit et al., 2012, p. 11). For this reason, agricultural production and its scopes should be integrated into the design of landscapes, through a multidisciplinary approach (Lovell, et al., 2010; Benoit et al., 2012, p. 6) highlight the different effects that characterise the scales, and introduce the concept of *landscape multifunctionality* as the consequence of the different ecosystem services provided by landscape management (Madureira et al., 2007).

Lefebvre et al. (2014) made some reflections about the concept of landscape scales and the role of the CAP in their management. They identify three landscape governance scales: i) at the farm level, where the farmers’ decisions shape single parcels; ii) at the landscape level, where the aggregation of some farms forms a landscape with homogeneous characteristics; and iii) at the global level, that is the all EU countries. In the first level, the basic elements of landscape patterns are managed, shaped, or even substituted by the farmers’ activity, according to their goals. These can change according to the farmers’ condition; being owners or simply producers, can influence the vision of farmers about aesthetical, cultural or leisure components of landscapes (Primdahl, 1999). As a consequence, agricultural practices decided by farmers are the main factors influencing the formation of landscapes (Benoit, et al., 2012).

The second level, called *landscape scale*, gathers all the units of the first level that have continuity in landscape characteristics; landscape patterns at this level are affected by decisions carried on at the farm level, which in absence of coordinated measures, which take into account their effects, pursue only individual aims (Lovell, et al., 2010). Regardless the objective, the management at the farm level is unsuitable to get good results for the composition and configuration of landscapes, because of the lack of commensuration

between the spatial scale of farms and landscape level (Goldman, Thompson, & Daily, 2007). Moreover, the effects of ecosystem services (meaning the welfare factors people can benefit, based on ecosystems) differ according to the spatial scale and they can even cross scales (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Despite that, in the literature landscape changes are mainly analysed at the farm scale level (Benoit et al., 2012). These changes are generated by policies that integrate agriculture and environment protection, as for example the AEMs (Lovell, et al., 2010). Finally, the European scale is the level where the management of the previous two assumes the value expressed by the European Landscape Convention, where European landscapes are conceived as “basic component[s] of the European natural and cultural heritage” (ELC, 2000). This common heritage considers diversity as a peculiar characteristic, which must be preserved and protected. With the aim of considering as public good not only the European landscapes, but also their diversity, (Lefebvre, et al., 2014) argue that the CAP, notwithstanding its shift from a mere tool based on production financial support to the integration of environmental protection into food production, is still focusing on the farm level. Due to this caveat, some scholars try to identify new official measures able to boost cooperation among farmers (Goldman, Thompson, & Daily, 2007) and scientific instruments towards the management of landscape scales (Benoit, et al., 2012) (Lovell, et al., 2010).

Simoncini (2015), puts in evidence how the big amount of literature about AFNs has scarcely paid attention to environmental impacts of AFNs. In the few cases this has happened, the focus has been more on the transformation, distribution, and consumption phases rather than in the production phase (Simoncini, 2015). This has produced a number of papers about the ecological impacts of AFNs, but the issue of networks in biodiversity preservation has been quite ignored. Simoncini’s is an example of how cultural and historical factors can be integrated into environmental analysis (with a focus on biodiversity) and how these factors represent driving forces for species conservation and motivations of farmers towards this goal. (Brunori & Di Iacovo, 2014) highlight the need of “increase[ing] consumers’ awareness of the impact of their choice on the environment, and namely on landscape” (p. 142). An important concept of Brunori & Di Iacovo’s is the “multifunctionality of food quality” which encloses diverse aspects like “health, environment, economy, sociality and ethics” (p. 152), and the need of new directions and lines of investigation in the planning field, which can be an effective instrument in developing sustainable agricultural landscapes.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The research is based on methods and techniques drawn up from the Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and on a theoretical framework based on the embeddedness concept (Polanyi, 1944; Granovetter, 1985). In qualitative research, the Grounded Theory (GT) is a “general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273) and is useful to explain and describe social research outputs. In GT, both processes of collecting and analysing data are carried out simultaneously, and compared each other during the research development. For these reasons, in-depth interviews have been chosen in order to “target the respondents’ perception and feelings” (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006, p. 485). In the next sections, the methodological process is explained as follows. Firstly, a brief explanation of the in-depth interview choice and its use in rural studies is given. Then, the theoretical framework used in order to structure interviews’ topics is explained in two steps: i) description of how the three types of embeddedness (ecological, spatial, and social) have been used as a theoretical guide in the construction of interviews and ii) a discussion concerning the four dimensions through which embeddedness influences and forges farmers’ methods of production and distribution.

After explaining the method for selecting interviewees, the analysis process is described through accurate explanation of the codification and saturation methods within the background of GT. Finally, the logic framework used to construct the Likert questionnaires for the Sardinian case study is shown.

The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the methodology used to analyse the web marketing of farms. The four *knowledges* or *geographical lores* (Crang, 1996) used to schematise websites contents are illustrated, as well as how they have been modified in order to fit the case studies.

2.1 Why in-depth interviews?

In-depth interviews are broadly used in qualitative research as powerful instruments to obtain detailed answers, and to capture interviewees’ points of view. In fact, the interviewer “is interested in the personal perspective, in the life experience and in the sense that the [interviewee] gives to it” (De Lillo, 2010, p. 80). In-depth interviews can successfully combine structure and flexibility (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003); the themes to be treated are defined by the researcher, who has little control on how the interviews are conducted (De Lillo, 2010). Moreover, this type of interviews have a strong degree of interactivity (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003), whose results depend on the ability of the interviewer in succeeding to drive the interviewee towards a full story of his experiences, in relation to the research goals. According to Crouch & McKenzie (2006, p. 493), interviewees have to be considered more as single case studies rather than “bearers of certain designated properties”. By telling their own experiences, interviewees describe how they interact with their social context; this interaction is the real subject of the study (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). In-depth

interviews are commonly used in the agro-food research literature (Home et al., 2014) in order to determine farmers' behaviours and ideas regarding specific topics (Higgins et al., 2008) or dividing them according to the degree of involvement in ecological practices (Morris & Kirwan, 2011b) or institutional programmes (Meadows et al., 2014).

2.2 Construction of the theoretical framework

The scope of the interviews is to determine if and to what extent the three embeddedness described by Penker (2006) influence farmers' behaviour. Then, it was necessary to include spatial, natural and social aspects into the interviews topics, paying attention not to force interviewees to express such ideas. In their work on the revision of the concept of ecological embeddedness, Morris & Kirwan (2011) propose four dimensions that explain how farmers "address ecological elements of food production" (Morris & Kirwan, 2011, p. 326) and how these elements influence the exchange process:

- i) understanding, i.e. how farmers take into account ecological benefits as a consequence of production methods; this concept includes instrumental and intrinsic values (Hinchcliffe et al., 2003). Farmers who an attitude towards instrumental values consider ecology as a mean to get economic profit, whereas environmental benefits are overriding in the latter vision, and economic advantages are perceived as a by-product of the production process;
- ii) realising; this dimension explains how farmers apply the previous concepts in order to realise the environmental benefits. These are not necessarily related to food production, such as certain land or water managements;
- iii) utilising is the management of the previous two dimensions for the information exchange. That is, how farmers communicate their ideas and methods to buyers. In this part of the analysis, websites and advertising materials should be included;
- iv) negotiating is the only dimension related to buyers only; it describes how consumers manage the information obtained by producers (that is, the previous three dimensions) in making their purchasing decisions.

Beyond their original application to ecological embeddedness made by Morris & Kirwan (2011, 2011b), these dimensions have been considered useful for both the interviews structure and the analysis of the results. In fact, not only the three kinds of embeddedness (spatial, social, and ecological) "overlap in reality" (Penker, 2006, p. 370), but also the umbrella term AFNs "comprises a diverse and heterogeneous set of practices, networks and markets" (Carvalho de Rezende, 2013, p. 22). Then, considering the association between AFNs and quality (Goodman, 2003), and that *quality* "is a multidimensional concept, involving place of origin, traceability, fairness, freshness, aesthetic attributes, [and] nutritious content" (Carvalho de Rezende, 2013,

p. 22), the four dimensions are considered suitable to all types of embeddedness. In order to include the concepts of space, ecology and society, the first dimension can be defined as follows:

understanding: how farmers conceive their activity as *alternative*, including non-economic benefits in the production and selling processes. Instrumental and intrinsic values are taken into account as a measure for the level of embeddedness.

The interview has been divided into three sections. In the first, farmers were asked to give general information about the farm and their structure: location, type of business (sole proprietorship, familiar business, enterprise, cooperative, and association), type of products, number of employees, farm size, start-up year). These data, far from having statistical relevance, are very useful in order to give consistency to the instances of a given concept (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), as they can be “indicators” of the conditions under which the concepts develop. The second section is about methods of production, where questions include issues about environmental protection. Moreover, the questions are structured in order to make evident intrinsic and instrumental values. The third section regards sale methods, that aim to underline the mechanisms the networks are based upon. For certified organic farms, section two and three take into account the role of the control body.

2.3 Identification of interviewees and sampling methodology

As AFNs include many types of actors and organisations, a selection criterion has to be established. In the first place, organic farmers were interviewed, due to various reasons. First, the accessibility of data: there are many databases about certified organic farms, some of which available on the Internet. The second reason is that organic farming had birth as a social movement (Michelsen, 2001) “on the basis of joint efforts by many different interests: farmers, consumers, traders as well as scientists and ordinary citizens” (p. 7). Moreover, organic production has local and global impacts. In fact, it contrasts the mainstream production system and aims at conserving the environment and recovering genetic heritage (Sánchez Hernández, 2009). For these reasons, focusing on organic farmers at first was considered a good choice in order to gather information regarding multifunctional purposes.

The recruitment procedure was conducted according to the different certification systems of Spain and Italy (European Commission, 2014b). In fact, Spain uses a mixed system, where each competent authority (i.e., the autonomous communities) can choose to entrust the management of organic control to public or private certificatory bodies. The community of Madrid in 1996 opted for the first solution, creating a control authority called *Committee for the Organic Farming of the Community of Madrid* (in Spanish: *Comité de Agricultura Ecológica de la Comunidad de Madrid*, CAEM). On the contrary, Italy system is based on private control bodies, thus each region confers the control power to one or more private companies. That said, for

the beginning of the sampling, for the Spanish case study the CAEM provided the list of organic certified farmers. In Sardinia, similar lists were retrieved in the website of the regional administration, and in a number of free databases provided by private control bodies.

During the survey process, at every interviews farmers were asked to indicate people they considered suitable for giving useful information about the discussed topics, according to the snowball sampling method (Goodman, 1961). This method, which is not based on random sampling, is very powerful in social research, because it “makes use of natural social networks” (Noy, 2008, p. 329). The satisfaction given by the relationship established between interviewer and interviewee determines the quality of the recommendation process (Noy, 2008).

As noted by Crouch and McKenzie (2006), in qualitative studies which involve a small number of interviewees, the term “sampling” is inappropriate. In fact, “this kind of respondents are not drawn (i.e. sampled) from a ‘target population’” (p. 492). This, far from invalidating the study, is coherent with the goal of the sampling of GT and many types of qualitative researches: a set of “concepts [and] their properties, dimensions, and variations” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 8) instead of a simple group of people. Indeed, this study focuses on how embeddedness influences farmers’ behaviours and their interaction with their socio-economic context.

Sonnino & Marsden (2006) and Tregear (2011) point out that the boundaries of alternative and conventional food systems are often blurred, and overlap each other. For this reason, it was decided to interview a group of conventional farmers in Sardinia, in order to discover if and to what extent they show embeddedness in their activity. The choice of making this comparison in Sardinia was due to the scope of the thesis, as it aims to draw upon best practices of spatial planning working in synergy with multifunctional agriculture and AFNs, in order to assess if and to what extent these practices could be applied in the Sardinian reality.

2.4 Codification and saturation methods

Bearing in mind that “theory consists of plausible relationships proposed among *concepts* and *sets of concepts*” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; italic in the original text), working with data coming from personal experiences (for example, interviews) requires to make an abstraction of the emerging ideas as much as possible. In GT, the codification method (Burnard, 1991; MacQueen, 1998; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) allows to systematise textual contents by collecting them in concepts that become more abstract during the analysis process (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Codes are mnemonic words or simple sentences that help schematise the specific themes found within the texts. They gather similar ideas (Rubin & Rubin, 2011), aiming at reducing the data in order to simplify the analysis (Fernandez Nuñez, 2006). During the process, codes are collected in a codebook. A sample of the codebook for the Sardinia case study is provided in the table 5; for each code, a definition is provided, as well as an indication of when to use it and when to avoid

it. As the analysis continues, definition can change in adapting to new information, and new codes are produced. (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This is a characteristic of the GT, where “data collection and analysis are interrelated processes” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) by employing the *constant comparative method* (Glaser, 1965) to relate and/or contrast the new incidences with former ones, in order to highlight similarities and differences. This not only reduce the risk of bias in the research, but is helps to deepen the analysis and refine the concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Codification is strictly linked to the sample size determination, as it uses the concept of saturation. As underlined by (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), this is the point of the analysis process where the information collected from the ongoing interview is redundant, i.e. the number of analysed interviews is sufficient in order to satisfactorily describe “the overall story, model, theory or framework” (Mason, 2010). In their study, Guest, Bunce, & Johnson (2006) demonstrate that within a homogeneous population, saturation could be reached in very few steps; they recognised that the majority of the themes was available in 12 interviews. In relation with codes, when there is no or little variation in the codebook (i.e. when no new codes are generated, and the definition or the indication related to their use does not change in progressing the analysis), the process has reached saturation. Besides saturation, a little number of interviews is justified by the aim of qualitative research, which focuses on “dimensions and aspects of the situation under investigation” (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006, p. 489) rather than the number of “cases”. That is, qualitative research based in in-depth interviews does not have a definitive character, pointing instead at describing and indicating a little fragment of reality. Reproduceability of qualitative studies lies in their abstraction level, which allows to adapt their hypotheses to situations with *similar* conditions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). When saturation is reached and codes have reached definitive stability, the codebook is ready and the process can continue. The next step consists in recognising how the identified themes and ideas relate to each other; that is, after disassembling the discourses, the codes have to be re-assembled through an inductive reasoning and gathered in comprehensive concepts called *categories* or *themes* (Merriam, 2009). Although categories are formed through the same comparison process used for systematise the concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), they are more abstract than codes. Categories have to abide by some criteria (Merriam, 2009), which consist of being: i) exhaustive, that is, all the collected data must be included into one category; ii) mutually exclusive, meaning that there has not to be a code that can fits two different categories; iii) sensitising, that is clearly defined in order to be understandable by outsiders; iv) conceptually consistent, meaning that they must have the same level of abstraction. The number of categories depends on the scope of the research and on the available data, but their number should not be excessive in order to implement an easy and adequate process of abstraction for the final theoretical model (Merriam, 2009). Finally, they have to be constantly compared each other in order to discover relationships among them. This is fundamental for the last step of the process, where categories and their interactions are used in order to formulate the final theory or model (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). at the end of the process, through a deductive reasoning, few final themes based on the categories are built. Themes are useful to describe the studied

phenomenon from an abstract point of view, capable to easily describe what the researcher has learnt in his/her study (Lodico et al., 2010).

	CATEGORY: NATURE PROTECTION				
Code	Environment	Quality	Sustainability	Health	Organic product superiority
Step 1	Speaking about environment, soil and natural cycles	Speaking about product quality and freshness		People and animal health	Speaking about features that make organic food better than conventional food
Step 2				People and animal health, including relationships between diet and illnesses	
Step 3	No changes in this category				
Step 4	Speaking about environment, soil and natural cycles, and animals as ecosystem elements				
Steps 5	Speaking about environment, soil and natural cycles and animals as ecosystem elements. Local condition are included				
Steps 6-9	No changes in this category				
Step 10			Speaking about environmental sustainability		Speaking about features that make organic food better than conventional food, including agrarian practices
Step 11	Speaking about environment, soil and natural cycles and animals as ecosystem elements. Local condition and biodiversity are included				Speaking about features that make organic food better than conventional food, including agrarian practices and from the economic point of view
Step 12			Speaking about environmental sustainability, including landscape		

Table 5: Example of codes definitions. Source: author.

2.5 Likert scale questionnaires

For the Sardinian case, it has been considered that the mere existence of embeddedness is not sufficient so as to assume a positive attitude of farmers towards the implementation of planning practices involving them. As such practices do not exist yet, additional data were necessary. For this reason, Likert questionnaires strictly focused on planning theory and practice have been delivered to Sardinian farmers. Likert scale is often used in agro-food studies in order to understand motivational behaviours (Kvakkestad, Rørstad, & Vatn, 2015). The questionnaire has been designed drawing upon the two case studies of Soto del Grillo and Milano rural parks. Questions have been structured based on the principles and aims of these two realities. Moreover, it has been decided to divide the questionnaire into two parts; in the first, general questions about planning theories and practices have been asked to farmers. In the second, the same topics have been addressed focusing on their personal background and territorial context. This division has been considered useful and effective in order to obtain a complete overview of farmers' thoughts. The two points of view (general and personal) can, in fact, highlight contingent discrepancies in answers. Questions are related to different themes, grouped into general categories shown in table 6.

jobs positions	Economic development
agricultural promotion	
landscape recovering	Management of landscape as public good
landscape management	
agricultural suitability	
competitiveness	Planning as support to enhance agricultural suitability and products marketing
market support	
products promotion	
development planning	
synergies between farmers and park authority	
labels	
touristic promotion	Planning as support to tourism

help in the accomplishment of policies	Improvement of farmers' professional updating and help in regulations accomplishment
access to innovative projects funding	
training support	
recovering of deteriorated areas	Spatial planning
rural infrastructure	
environmental and land use restrictions	
organic mandatory measures	
environmental and consumption education	Educational support

Table 6: Likert questionnaires ideas. Source: author.

For each question, posed in the form of a statement about a specific topic, farmers have to declare their level of agreement, by choosing within a range that goes from -3 (meaning "I totally disagree") to +3 (meaning "I totally agree").

2.6 A framework to analyse websites based on *geographical lores*

The study of the relations between spatial planning and AFNs within the rural parks of Soto del Grillo and Milan has been conducted as a deskwork, with an analysis of websites contents. This choice is due to different reasons: firstly, the two parks that have been chosen as best practices have created trademarks, and it is interesting to see how landscape and environmental protection are treated in relation to the parks regulation and labels. This is true especially in the case of Milan, where the label is not a form of food promotion, instead of being focused on environmental measures as a form of park publicity.

Secondly, it has been decided to take into account the analysis of promotional materials, as suggested by Morris & Kirwan's study (2011, 2011b). Moreover, as labels work with the delegation mechanism, it is worth studying how trust is built between producers and consumers through web marketing.

2.6.1 Crang's geographical lores

Being the analysed materials composed of texts and images working synergically in order to convince customers about the product quality, it was necessary to use a conceptual framework that could help creating a descriptive model for them. The work of Crang (1996) has been considered a good base to do so. In fact, his study draws on the concept of *displacement*, that is the understanding of the food circuits where not only

the geographical origin of products matters, but also how flows of commodities and information contribute to determine consumers' attitude towards purchasing decisions. These flows are composed of "places of 'origin', biographies of distribution, and appropriate settings for use" (Crang, 1996, p. 48). Crang's model has been modified and applied by Morris & Kirwan (2010) to the case of naturally embedded food products (NEFPs), a type of AFNs based on the use of grassland biodiversity as a base for quality (and final product promotion). NEFPs use the notion of *quality* in its broad meaning, as Sage (2003) defines it: "ecologically embedded characteristics, related to the place of production and the cultivation methods"; taking into account all these considerations, the model applied to NEFPs has been considered suitable for the case studies.

The original *geographical lores* described by Crang are the following: i) sweeping images of places, that make products able to evoke sensations or emotions ; ii) processes of production and distribution, which represents the construction of a "contextualised account of their cultural biographies" (Crang, 1996, p. 54); iii) associations between products and ideas, that complete the contextualisation of the previous category; and iv) setting for products use, that produces an aesthetic re-contextualisation of commodities. The fourth category, under the point of view of food, can be described as images that produce "a sense of celebration" (Morris & Kirwan, 2010, p. 137), giving the idea of a product that is *different* and has to be consumed for special occasions.

In the case of NEFPs, these categories were considered unable to "capture the full range of geographical *knowledges* being deployed by producers" (Morris & Kirwan, 2010, p. 134). Then, they are modified. In the first category, all types of images or stories about history and geography identifying the product origin as a brand are included, defining the *geo-historical knowledge*. In the second type of knowledge, instead of the simple process of production and distribution, ecological and environmental-related ideas and methods are included, generating the *naturalistic knowledge*.

A further modification has been done for the study of the websites from Soto del Grillo and Milan rural park. Indeed, the discursive category that associates commodities and ideas (Crang, 1996), which in the case of NEFPs, is related to discourses concerning the food chains², is recognised insufficient in order to take into account all the aspects used to promote alternative products. During the analysis, a particular set of ideas used to promote the farms and their products was identified as important for the distinction of the organic food market from the conventional one. The set of ideas regards the social function and/or purposes of organic and alternative markets, as by-products of farming and leisure activities (eco-tourism, workshops, and so on). Sometimes, these activities have no direct relation to food production, nor are they used in order to justify a higher price of food. Moreover, they have the scope of highlighting the otherness of AFNs with

² Ideas typical of this kind of knowledge are, for example animal welfare, diet, and health, or even production characteristic that justify the major price of products (Morris & Kirwan, 2010).

respect to the anomic capitalistic market. Then, the creation of a new and more specific class of knowledge was considered helpful in order to highlight the peculiarity of these ideas. These new types of knowledge are named *socio-economic purposes and compromises*. The four *knowledges* used for the study are shown in table 7.

Geo-historical knowledge	images and stories about history and geography are used to create a strong link between the products and their origin
Naturalistic knowledge	description of the whole production process, highlighting the environmental-friendly methods and practices
Socio-economic purposes and compromises	factors that, in some ways, determine the “alternativeness” of AFNs and the influence of ideas about collective benefits, generation of trust between producers and consumers, and opposition to capitalist economy in the business activity
Setting for products use	Recipes, advices for preparation, images of ready dishes

Table 7: knowledges used to the websites analysis. Source: author.

Chapter 3: Case studies description

In this chapter, a brief background about the case studies treated in the study is shown. First, as a best food planning practice in Italy, the food policy of Lombardy region is proposed. Then, the *Parco Agricolo Milano Sud* (Rural Park of South Milan) and its internal trademark of *produttore di qualità ambientale* (environmental quality producer) is presented, together with the particular planning practices that regulate land use and agricultural production within the park. The park is a very good example of how to integrate promotion of local food and policy support to food networks, in order to counter land-taking processes.

Secondly, the case of the Community of Madrid is presented, with a focus on the *Parque Agroecológico de Soto del Grillo* (Agro-ecological Park of Soto del Grillo) in the municipality of Rivas-Vaciamadrid. This municipal project includes a trademark for the food produced by local farmers as well, and is connected to the monthly farmers' market that takes place in the town.

Finally, a background for the agricultural production and territorial policies in Sardinia is described.

3.1 The region of Lombardy, Italy

In the last decades, within the Lombardy region, attention to food has grown very fast and has focused more and more on its multifunctional dimension. The Italian region has established various policies where food is related to sustainability, urban planning, innovation, and tourism.

This considerable interest is due to the economic relevance of the food system in Lombardy; in fact, in 2013 it represented the 16.5% of the national gross product of agro-food production in Italy (Regione Lombardia, 2015). The regional food industry is of primary importance, with an incidence of 14% on the value of the national agro-industrial production (Regione Lombardia, 2014). Lombardy also commands a prestigious position in terms of the quality agro-food production³. Thus, food represents a production sector of excellence, playing an invaluable role in the entire region, not just from an economic point of view but also with respect to the protection, upgrading and improvement of the territory, contributing to the enhancement of its local and tourist identity.

Among the measures characterizing the strategic choice of the Region in supporting its agricultural heritage and its agro-food economic system, interventions aimed at attaining innovation and competitiveness of the local agro-food circuit together with its embeddedness is taking a growing importance in recent years. Since

³ Lombardy counts 31 PDOs (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGIs (Protected Geographical Indication) products over a total of 264 in Italy; 22 CDOs (registered designation of origin); 5 GCDOS (Guaranteed and Controlled Designated of Origin); 15 TGIs (Traditional Guaranteed Specialities) wines, and no less than 248 traditional products, all selected on the basis of their processing, conservation and maturing procedures (Regione Lombardia, 2014).

2009, the establishment of regional agricultural districts⁴ (DGR n. 8/10085, 2009) and synergistic arrangements among the different players of the supply chains has consolidated the whole sector, thus ensuring a continuous and sustainable growth. In 2012 the Lombard agro-food high technology cluster (CAT.AL) has been established, specifically aimed at boosting the role of innovation in the agro-food sector⁵.

Lombardy's Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 puts particular emphasis on improving the competitiveness and quality of agro-food circuits, as well as on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems⁶. Moreover, the agro-food system has been recognized a strategic competitive factor within the recently approved Regional Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3), focusing on the need to enable a technological leap of the bio-regional economy through eco-intensification of production and the sustainability of the agricultural and food chain⁷.

This strong regional engagement towards the enhancement of local food cycles has been further reinforced by the presence of the Universal Exhibition *Expo Milano 2015 - Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life* that the city of Milan is currently hosting (May - October 2015). Accordingly, the Region undertook many initiatives to help the sector take full advantage of the event and position itself advantageously. Funds were made available for the promotion of the *locality* of food products and a number of consciousness-raising campaigns were launched, in particular in the field of agro-food education⁸, as well as urban agriculture experimentations⁹.

⁴ The agricultural districts are productive systems created with the aim of promoting the development of integrated strategies across the entire supply chain. Particularly, they have been conceived as an opportunity for the local agricultural and agro-food realities characterized by an historical and territorial identity to promote the development of high quality and certified productions.

⁵ CAT.AL is a partnership of enterprises, universities and research hubs based in Lombardy (<http://www.clusteragrofoodlombardia.eu>)

⁶ The RDP for Lombardy was formally adopted by the EC in July 2015, outlining Lombardy's priorities for using the €1.2 billion of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (www.regione.lombardia.it).

⁷ Within the RIS3 the production and processing of food has been recognised as a key specialisation for the regional economy not only for its economic and social impact but also as driver to stimulate the demand for innovation.

⁸ Alongside more traditional nutrition education initiatives, in 2010 the "Food education courses towards Expo 2015" project has been launched by the Region, in collaboration with the University of Milano Bicocca. Its main goals are to promote a better understanding the food processing system by providing a deeper insight into the relationship between production systems, food consumption and environmental protection; and to instil healthy eating habits through a better understanding and consumption of quality food, obtained with environmental-friendly practices, or rooted in the tradition and culture of rural areas (<http://www.buonalombardia.regione.lombardia.it>).

⁹ In recent years the city of Milan has been characterized by the multiplication of social gardens, didactic gardens, therapeutic gardens, also supported by the "Rules for entrusting shared gardens" issued by the Town Council of Milan in May 2012. These initiatives are characterized by a strong "community character" and conceived as tools able to create a relationship, in variable extent, between the practice of cultivation and the construction of shared patterns for life, as well as expressing the need to change and transform the public space.

3.2 Towards a local food policy for the city of Milan

The Municipality of Milan has recently made a first concrete step towards the adoption of an integrated and unified approach to the issue of food. In July 2014 the city Government, in partnership with the Cariplo Foundation¹⁰, signed an agreement supporting the development of a local food policy for the city of Milan on a five-years term. Conceived in a participatory way, encouraging the combination of top-down support from key institutional actors and bottom-up energies of civil society, the on-going process of designing a local food policy aims at linking and capitalising the many existing projects, and developing a more sustainable and equitable city starting from food-related issues. A public consultation has been launched in February 2015, involving the city board, the third sector associations, start-ups and large companies, foreign communities and citizens. The urban food audit ended in June 2015, resulting in the identification of 10 priorities along different dimensions: governance, education, waste management, access to food, wellness, environment, agricultural ecosystems, production, finance and trade. For each of the thematic fields, a Food Mall has been started (i.e. a planning panel), in order to turn guidelines and relevant objectives into 2-3 pilot projects¹¹.

Moreover, under this framework the city of Milan launched in 2014 the design of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact¹², an agreement involving more than 40 world cities aimed at creating an international network for the exchange of ideas and good practices on the issue of food to be translated into concrete actions for the coordination of food policies. The text comprehends suggestions based on the direct experiences of participating cities in the development of food strategies that have an impact on economic, social and environmental life of the city, but also on people's health¹³. The Pact represents a key step in building awareness of urban food systems, policies and practices and harness political engagement by cities in order to ensure future activities on related issues.

3.3 The best practice from Lombardy: the Parco Agricolo Sud

The Parco Agricolo Sud Milano is a regional park including 61 municipalities belonging to the province of Milan, Italy (figure 1).

Its history started in the 1960s, when the necessity of protecting the green agricultural belt in South Milan was expressed for the first time; some guidelines for the establishment of accessible natural green spaces

¹⁰ The Cariplo Foundation is a private foundation whose mission is to support the social, cultural, political and economic development of the country (<http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/en/index.html>).

¹¹ <http://www.foodpolicymilano.org>

¹² The Pact has been subscribed on 15th October 2015 by the Mayors of 100 cities from all over the world (<http://www.foodpolicymilano.org/en/urban-food-policy-pact-2/>).

¹³ The pact addresses the following main challenges: develop sustainable dietary guidelines; encourage and support social and solidarity economy activities; help provide services to food producers in and around cities; support short food chains; and raise awareness of food loss and waste (<http://www.foodpolicymilano.org>).

appeared in the Inter-municipal Master Plan of Milan (in Italian: Piano Intercomunale Milanese, P.I.M.) (Associazione per il parco Sud di Milano, n.d.). The Park has been officially established in 1990, with the Regional Law n. 24/1990 of Lombardy. It is managed by the Province of Milan and covers a surface of about 47,000 hectares in total.

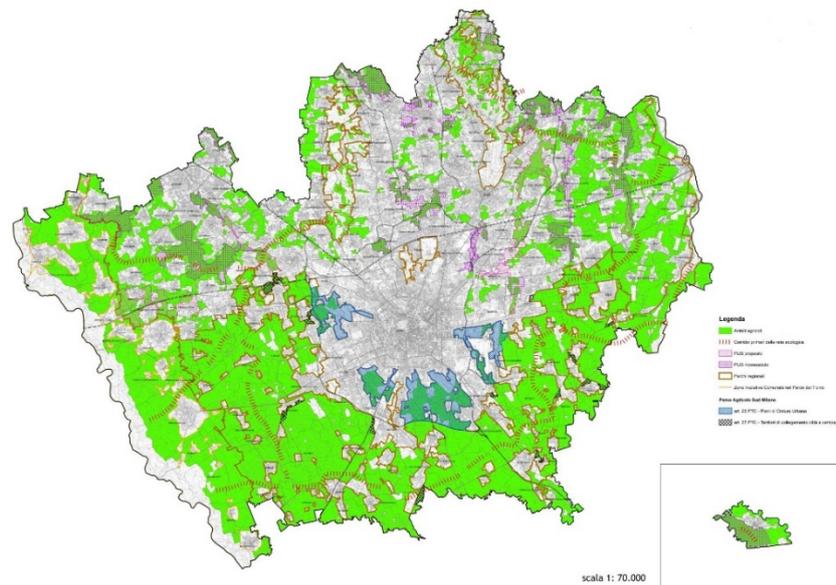


Figure 1: map of the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano.

Source: www.pietromezzi.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/A.A.-PROVINCIA.jpg; accessed: November 2015.

Its main scopes are: i) the landscape and environmental safeguard and recovery of the areas connecting city and countryside; ii) the ecological balance of the metropolitan area; iii) the safeguard, recovering and empowerment of the agro-forestry activities according to the destination of the area; iv) the cultural and recreational fruition of the environment for citizens (Sparla, 2014). Around these themes, many activities are at work in the park's territory: food production, catering, direct selling, accommodation, environmental education, sport, and rural tourism (Sparla, 2014). In 2010, the park created the quality mark named "Marchio azienda agricola - produttore di qualità ambientale" (Farm Label – Environmental Quality Producer). Farmers who want to certify themselves as environmental quality producers have to accomplish some measures related to six aspects: i) sustainability, ii) soil conservation, iii) resources saving, iv) food supply shortening, v) energy saving, and vi) social sustainability (cultural initiatives, environmental education, rural tourism). The mark is not a guarantee for the products themselves, but a certification of the maintenance of the local environment and traditions by farmers; thus, its main scope is the promotion of the park and its territory.

Some secondary projects have been developed around the production activities of the park. Among them, a caterer named "PARC - Prodotti Agricoli in Catering" (agricultural products in catering) working with 22 of the producers enrolled in the quality label, and aimed at combining events organisations with local food

promotion; and an ethical economy district (Distretto di Economia Solidale del Parco Agricolo Sud, DESR) created in 2008 with the objective of promoting the farm economic development, boosting alternative modes of consumption and multifunctional production, as well as supporting biodiversity in order to change the conventional modes of cultivation (especially the monocultures of rice and intensive livestock) that still characterise the park (DESR Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, 2010). Today, the district gathers 20 organic farms, more than 40 Solidarity Purchasing Groups (SPG. In Italian: Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale, GAS), 6 municipalities and other actors enrolled in the theme of ethical economy (Corrado, 2013).

Furthermore, the park promotes cultural and historical aspects, like typical architectures showing the agricultural traditions of the region (Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, Storia, cultura e tradizioni); above all, the cascina (a typical farmstead of Po Valley, especially in Lombardy), the marcite (watermeadows), and the fontanili (karst springs).

Being characterized by an original mix of functions (Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, Il Parco), and strong synergies between economic empowerment of a traditional activity and land planning (Sparla, 2014), the park is managed by two different planning instruments: i) the Spatial Coordination Plan (in Italian: Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento, PTC), the plan established by the regional law for spatial regions recognised as strategic, and ii) the Agricultural Sectorial Plan (in Italian: Piano di Settore Agricolo, PSA). The latter is a specific tool regulating rural activities, in order to avoid soil and water pollution, and realises the preservation of the traditional landscape.

3.4 The community of Madrid, Spain

Despite the small size of the Community of Madrid (about 8023 km², the twelfth Autonomous Community on the total of 19 in Spain) and its relevant urbanisation¹⁴, the economic importance of the agro-food production is quite relevant; in 2012, it accounted for 567 million Euros (Mercasa, 2013). The little percentage respect to the regional Gross Value Added (GVA, 0.11%) is due to the strong dualism between urban and rural zone, and its real value is disguised by the enormous economic weight of the metropolitan region (Comunidad de Madrid, 2015). This amount has been reduced in the last decades, since in the recent past it accounted for a 33% of the GVA in the rural municipalities, and for a 21% in the urban. Nevertheless, a considerable growth of organic production (379 operators in 2013, versus 257 in 2009) has been registered within the Community (Ministerio de agricultura, 2014).

¹⁴ According to the OECD classification, over 179 municipality belonging to the community, 77 are classified as urban and occupy the 48.2% of the regional territory, with a population representing the 97% of the total. (Comunidad de Madrid, 2015).

From the consumption point of view, the Community of Madrid registered in 2012 a per capita food expenditure 1.6% greater than the national average (Mercasa, 2013). On the other hand, the Community of Madrid shows high figures in terms of fast food consumption among the Spanish regions; together with Andalusia and Catalonia, it represents half of the total Spanish fast food consumption (Rodríguez Sirgado & Lamas, 2011). If this can be explained partially through the big tourist flows within the region, it is also true that Madrid consumers show a higher consumption of ready dishes, fizzy drinks, and processed fruit and vegetable than the national average (Mercasa, 2013).

The new RDP for 2014-2020 has planned a strategy based on “a sustainable, smart and integrate growth” (Comunidad de Madrid, 2015b), whose measures are strategically framed as follows:

- i) promotion of innovation and knowledge exchange;
- ii) improvement of the viability of agricultural uses, and their competitiveness and sustainability;
- iii) boost of short food chains, quality regimes and local markets in order to improve the food chain organisation;
- iv) restoration and preservation of agricultural and forestall ecosystems;
- v) resources efficiency and low-carbon economy promotion;
- vi) promotion of economic development in rural areas.

Deepening into the strategy iii), some needs have been identified, and for each of them, a set of priorities have been established. The first two priorities fit the need of shortening food chains and promoting local food. Indeed, the little distance between the city of Madrid and the rural spaces of production is considered an important opportunity for the food supply, due to the economic influence of the food market in a capital city with more than 6 million consumers (Comunidad de Madrid, 2014). A number of experiences in this sense already exist, as for example the initiative named *Madrid cultivates and produces* (in Spanish: *Madrid cultiva y produce*), a farmers' market established in 2011 with 30 producers. It now accounts for 61 farmers (Comunidad de Madrid, 2014). Urban gardens are also taken into account in order to shorten the food chains and make a stricter relationship between producers and consumers; they are grouped in a network called *Community of Madrid Urban gardens networks* (In Spanish: *Red de huertos urbanos de la Comunidad de Madrid*). The gardens are linked to various realities, as for example neighbouring or social organisations, environmental associations, university, and municipalities, too (Simón Rojo & Morán Alonso, n.d.). Moreover, the Community accounts for six types of food designated as DO or PGI: Sierra del Guadarrama and Avila meat, Madrid wines, Chinchón anise, Madrid oil, and Campo Real olives. A regional trademark called *Food of Madrid* (in Spanish: *Alimentos de Madrid*) has also been created¹⁵.

¹⁵ <http://www.alimentosmadrid.es/>.

Other measures link agricultural activities, biodiversity, and landscape; this is especially true in zone of high naturalistic value, as for example these that are included in the Natura 2000 network and mountain regions. Regarding rural municipalities, the Community of Madrid is one of the regions where the phenomenon of soil sealing is quite limited; only the 3% of land use is classified as artificial surface (Comunidad de Madrid, 2015). Notwithstanding, this percentage has doubled in last years, and for this reason agricultural production and forestry activities are considered strategic in order to maintain high value landscapes and avoid soil erosion and loss of biodiversity (Comunidad de Madrid, 2015).

From the point of view of the economic development, the RDP considers fundamental the creation of jobs position in rural areas, and the priorities to reach this goal go from farms modernisation, producers' formation and inclusion, and support to small enterprises, to farms competitiveness enhancement and integration in food chains through quality systems, local markets promotion, and the boosting of producers' cooperation. Indeed, it is recognised a high atomisation of the primary sector and food industry that, along with the progressively ageing of producers, impedes a complete development of the complex system of production and distribution, causing an imbalance of the food chain that appears more focused on the distribution (Comunidad de Madrid, 2015b). Environment protection and enhancement of rural tourism are included as horizontal goals of these issues.

On 15th October 2015, together with more than 100 cities of all over the world, the municipality administration of Madrid has signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

3.5 The best practice from the Community of Madrid: the Parque Agroecológico Soto del Grillo

The *Parque Agroecológico Soto del Grillo* is located in the municipality of Rivas-vaciamadrid, as a result of a municipal project started in 2013. The project has a clear multifunction scope, focusing on three aspects (Romea Rodriguez, 2013):

- i) socio-economic recovering of the region named *Soto del Grillo*;
- ii) environmental recovery;
- iii) dissemination of information about the biodiversity of the region.

In order to reach these general scope, the specific goals are: promotion of fresh, local and seasonal food consumption; boost of new jobs in the agricultural sector; enhancement of short food supply chains, in accordance to a sustainable development and the conservation of the typical landscape and the natural resources (Ayuntamiento de Rivas-Vaciamadrid, 2015). The park is located within the South East Regional Park (in Spanish: Parque Regional del Sureste), a protected space established in 1994 belonging to the Natura 2000 network, declared Special Bird Protection Area (in Spanish: *zona de especial protección para las aves*,

ZEPA). Regarding the South East regional park zoning, the Parque Agroecológico Soto del Grillo is part of the zone D: “regulated exploitation of natural resources” (Romea Rodriguez, 2013). This zone include areas where the main activities are related to agriculture and livestock exploitation as well as water, forest and mining resources (Parque Regional del Sureste, n.d.). The *Parque Agroecológico Soto del Grillo* has an area of 85 hectares, and it is been divided into different zones (figure 2): a) environmental protection; b) agricultural production; c) other agricultural uses; d) education and community gardens, and e) equipment and services.

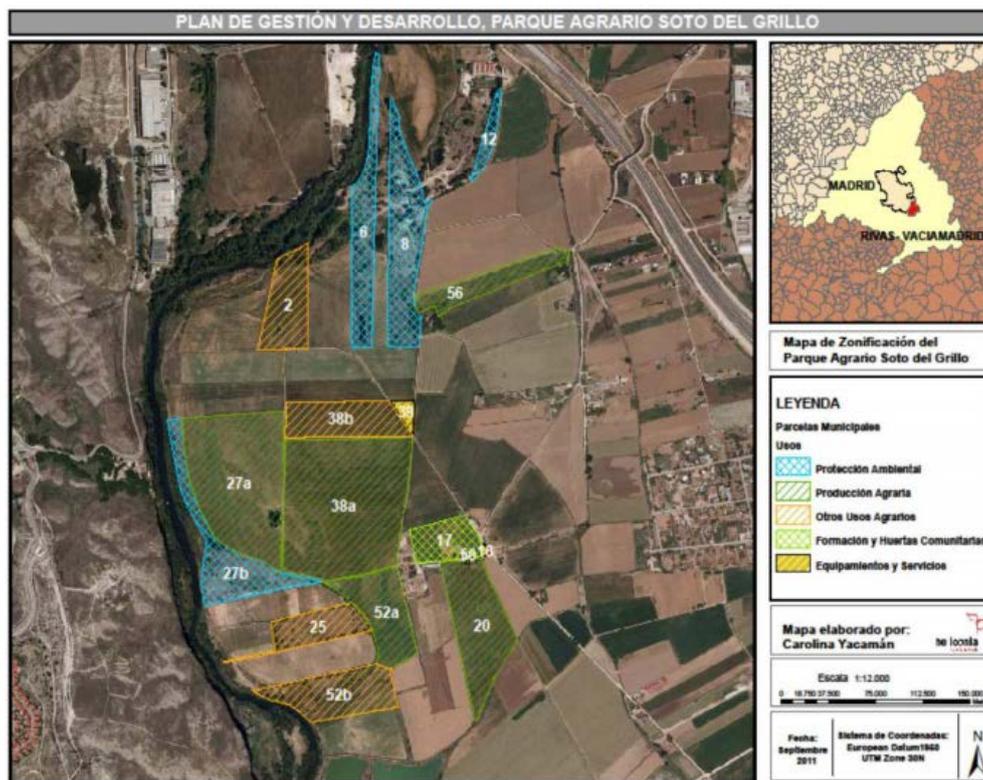


Figure 2: Zoning of the Soto del Grillo Park. Source: Romea Rodriguez, (2013)

The b) zone is partitioned into 17 parcels, which are managed by farmers through a scoring based on different parameters provided that they enrol in the register of organic certification. The parameters are the following:

- i) project developer skills (experience; formation);
- ii) innovative aspects of the production process;
- iii) marketing strategies (distribution channels; promotion);
- iv) economic and financial viability
- v) other criteria (job creation; social and local initiatives)

At the park borders, some interventions for environmental protection and biodiversity improvement have been realised: reforestation, riparian of forestation, and delimitation of farms with live fences.

The project includes the municipal farmers’ market, which monthly takes place in a municipal area in the periphery of Rivas-Vaciamadrid (Campelo & Piedrabuena, 2013). The expected results of this link is to create

a synergy between production and consumption of organic food (figure 3). In April 2015, the project has been enriched with the creation of a quality label named *fresh product from Soto del Grillo Agroecological Park* (in Spanish: *producto fresco del Parque Agroecológico Soto del Grillo*).

The label was created in order to boost the commercialisation of food produced within the park, through four objectives: i) promotion of agro-ecological practices, which includes food quality, economic viability, water and soil protection; ii) origin and proximity, in order to make consumers aware of the food provenance and food miles; iii) quality; the cultivation practices guarantee people health, environmental protection, and assure that the product has been harvested at its best maturation point; iv) seasonality, which promotes healthy food consumption habits and differentiated nutrition (Ayuntamiento de Rivas Vaciamadrid, 2015).

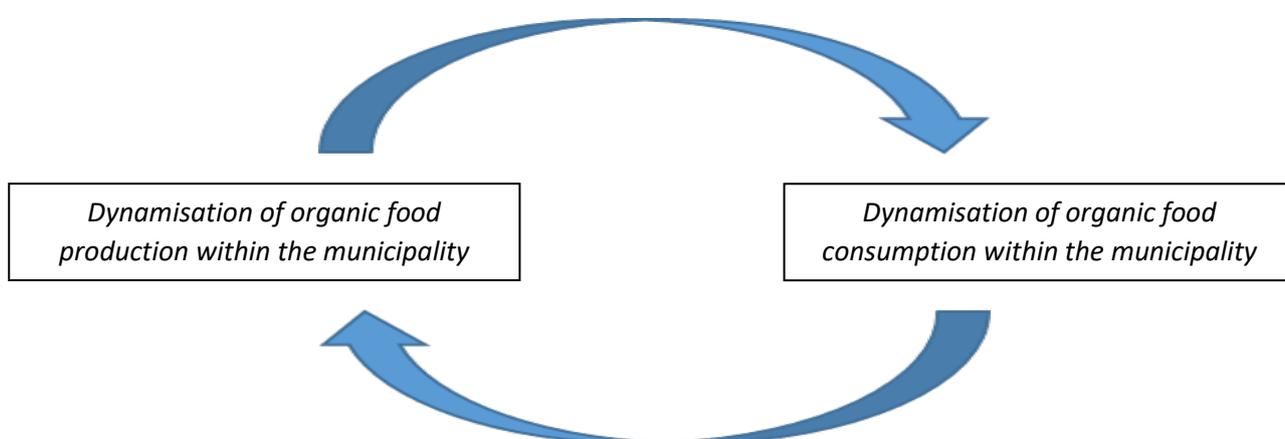


Figure 3: interrelations between food production and consumption within the park. Source: author's work upon Romea Rodriguez (2013).

3.6 Sardinia: a good place for food planning experimentations?

From the point of view of the European Cohesion Policy (ECP), Sardinia is classified as a transition region, because its per capita income is comprised between the 75% and the 90% of the European average (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2015). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCDE) classification, the island has only one urban pole (Cagliari, the administrative capital of the region), that covers only the 0.4% of the regional area. the only rural area characterised by specialist and intensive agriculture, which covers a 8.4% of the regional area, is located In the province of Cagliari. The rest of the Sardinian territory is classified as intermediate rural area and predominantly rural area with development problems. This fact is partially due to the population density, one of the lowest of Italy (CREA - Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura, 2015). The ratio of primary sector of Sardinia is the 4.1% of the GDP, which is greater than both the correspondent percentage for Southern Italy and the entire country. Moreover, the regional Value Added for agriculture represents the 4.1% of the national Value Added in this sector and it is growing since the year 2012 (CREA - Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura, 2015).

The peculiarity of agriculture production in Sardinia is its extensive character¹⁶. Its abandonment may determine significant problems to the balance among biodiversity preservation, soil management, and natural resources conservation (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2015). The small farms dimension is one of the factors that contributes to maintain this low-impact system, also because farmers are significantly respectful in regard of natural and ecological resources; this is included in the SWOT analysis of the RDP, as a strength.

The RDP considers six priorities for the period 2014-2020:

- i) knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
- ii) Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management;
- iii) Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management;
- iv) Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems in agriculture and forestry;
- v) Resource efficiency and shift to low carbon and climate resilience economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- vi) Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Regarding the priority iii), the RDP identifies as strength the quality products of the region, above all the production of ewes' milk, one of the most important at the European level¹⁷. Moreover, Sardinia accounts for 6 PDOs, 1 PGI, and 35 products with various geographical schemes. Within the zootechnical sector, efficient forms of association and cooperation are present, standing out the considerable atomisation of the primary sector. However, it is evident a scarce horizontal and vertical integration of the food chains, and a strong imbalance towards the commercialisation segment. The lack of planning causes difficulties to farms in being competitive within international markets, and firms do not put into practice adequate marketing for the connexion between products and territory (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2015).

From the point of view of the preservation and conservation of agricultural and forestry ecosystems (priority iv), the region shows a rich biodiversity heritage, which is threaten by the socio-economic and agronomic conditions. The insufficient reproduction of native germplasm causes the recourse to introduced species that causes genetic erosion. In order to contrast these issues, the regional administration has established in 2014 a law for the preservation of local biodiversity (Regional Law n. 16/2014). Among other thing, the law established the *custodian farmers* register and the *Community of agrarian biodiversity preservation*. The

¹⁶ In 2010, the 77.2% of agricultural activity was classified as extensive (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2015).

¹⁷ In 2011, Sardinia produced 2.8 million of quintals of ovine milk, representing the 67% of national production and 25% of European production (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2015).

scope, as indicated by art. 3, is to promote and spread the knowledge of local varieties, to develop a shared awareness and respect of the environment, through education initiatives and the collaboration with local associations and institutions (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2014).

The RDP highlights the presence of 126 sites belonging to the Natura 2000 network, with a total surface of 570,000 ha of which 78.7% is terrestrial and represents 11.5% of the agricultural land of the island. For the integration of environmental protection and agricultural production, the RDP identifies the need of measures to prevent the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices, through the management plans of Natura 2000 sites. The multifunctionality of agriculture is also recognised, that grants the production of food quality and the protection of the environment. Despite this, the scarce consensus of local communities regarding the management plans of Natura 2000 sites represents a threat for their implementation and enhancement (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2015).

Multifunctional agriculture in Sardinia plays also a big role in tourism and cultural activities. Agritourisms within the region account for 3.1% of the entire Italian country. In 2008, in the island a regional register of didactic farms was established, where the farms that fit the requirements of the quality charter for didactic farms are collected (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2007b). In 2013, 160 farms were gathered into the regional trademark *Sardinia Didactic Farms* (in Italian: *Fattorie Didattiche della Sardegna*), with an increment of 14% with respect to the 2012 figures (CREA - Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura, 2015).

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, research outcomes are fully exposed. After three tables 8 and 9, showing numerical data from the Spanish and Italian farms, the interviews results are reported.

Firstly, the final themes found according to the exposed methodology are shown; they work as driving forces that, combined in various degrees, form the farmers' behaviours. A bubble helps to visualise how the driving forces work in juxtaposition (vertical dimension) or in synergy (horizontal dimension), where the bubble size qualitatively represents the influence of a theme respect to the others. An example of bubble diagram is shown in figure 4. Behaviours are exposed singularly, both through fully descriptions and quotes from interviews. Quotes are useful in order to report discursively the codification process outputs, and they are considered representative of the repeated incidences of a single concept (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The two case studies of the Community of Madrid and Sardinia are presented separately. It must be noted that the theme are not mutually exclusive, meaning that farmers who show an attitude which is predominant, they do not exclude thoughts typical of other themes; this is quite typical in rural sociology studies (Morris & Kirwan, 2011b; Ingram et al., 2013). Models distinguish the driving ideas found during the interviews, and do not realise a rigid classification of farmers.

Secondly, the results of the websites analysis from the best practices of the Parque Agroecológico Soto del Grillo and the Parco Agricolo Sud are reported.

Finally, the answers to Likert questionnaires from Sardinia are shown.

Type	No. of producers	
	Spain	Sardinia
Shops ^a	10	5
Box schemes	7	2
Farmers' markets	5	7
Restaurants and school	5	4
Internet	4	1
Specialised wholesalers	3	-
Weekly baskets in city points	2	1
Direct selling in the farm	-	13
Pick-your-own	1	1
Processors	1	-
Other organic producers	1	-
<u>Large-scale retail trade</u>	-	2

^a including specialised (chemists', herbalists', etc.)

Table 8: selling methods used by farms in both the case studies

Code	Farm Characteristics					
	No. ha	No. employees	Products	Start-up year	Type of Business	Gender ^a
1M	12	1	Cereals	2013	Familiar	m
2M	1	1	Vegetables	1995	Firm	m
1B	2	4	Vegetables	2011	Familiar	b (2)
1F	11	7	Vegetables	2004	Cooperative	f
2B	2	3	Vegetables	2012	Association	b (3)
3M	2	5	Vegetables	2013	Firm	m
2F ^b	5	7	Vegetables, cereals	2006	Familiar	f
4M	40+200 ^c	4	Milk	2011	Familiar	m
3F	2	3	Vegetables	2013	Cooperative	f
5M	2	2	Vegetables	2009	Foundation	m
6M	2	4	Vegetables	2013	Familiar	m
7M	5	1	Cereals	2009	Familiar	m
4F	500	4	Meat	2000	Familiar	f

^a m: male, f: female, b: both (more than a person; in bracket, the number of them)

^b producer not enrolled in the CAEM.

^c 200 ha are municipality-owned.

Table 9: farm data, Community of Madrid

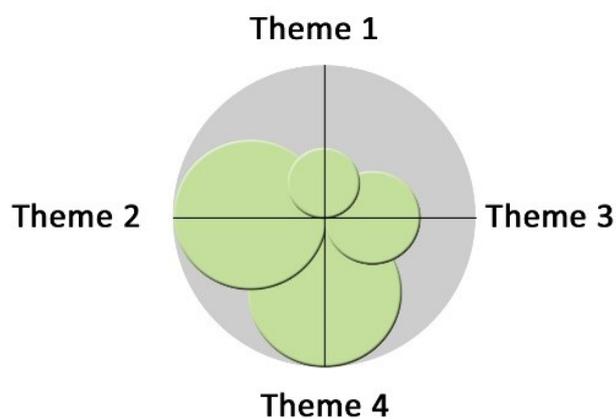


Figure 4: example of a bubble diagram. Source: author.

Code	Farm Characteristics					
	No. ha	No. employees	Products	Start-up year	Type of Business	Gender
S1m	3	5	Vegetables, eggs	1996	Familiar	m
S2m	12	6	Wine	2002	Familiar	m
S3m	0.5 (34) ^a	4	Vegetables	2002	Familiar	m
S4m	160	5	Cheese	2004	Sole trader	m
S1f	4.5	4	Vegetables, fruit, olive oil	2009	Cooperative	f
S5m	30	2	Vegetables, grain, berries	2000	Sole trader	m
S2f	1	1	Honey	2004	Sole trader	f
S3f	4.7	1	Vegetables, olives, fruit	2007	Sole trader	f
S6m	7.5	3	Vegetables, fruit	1986	Familiar	m
S7m	140	2	Cheese	1978	Familiar	m
S4f	2	4	Aromatic and officinal herbs	1976	Familiar	f
S8m	9	4	Honey, essential oils, vegetables	2001	Cooperative	m
S9m	5	4	Vegetables, grain	2007	Sole trader	m
S10m	43	2	Olive oil	1997	Firm	m
S1b	12	1	Olive oil, wine	2005	Sole trader	b
S5f	20	1	Honey, vegetables, fruit	2008	Sole trader	f
S11m	5	1	Wine	2006	Sole trader	m
S12m	6	2	Olive oil	2008	Sole trader	m

^aOnly 0.5 ha over 34 are under organic cultivation

Table 9: farms data, Sardinia

4.1 Community of Madrid

In total, 13 farms have been contacted. Some of them are shared ownership, so the interviewees are 16 in total. Just one of them is not enrolled in the CAEM. Saturation was reached at the 12th interview, when the 97% of codes had been collected (fig. 5).

The categories that describe the embeddedness of producers are the following: i) economy; ii) ecology; iii) tradition/innovation; iv) society. In the bubble diagram (figure 6) economy and ecology are in opposition in the y-axis, because it was clear from the interviews that economic interests and green practices are very often in mutual contrast. Society and tradition/innovation themes, instead, work synergically and for this reason have been put in the x-axis.

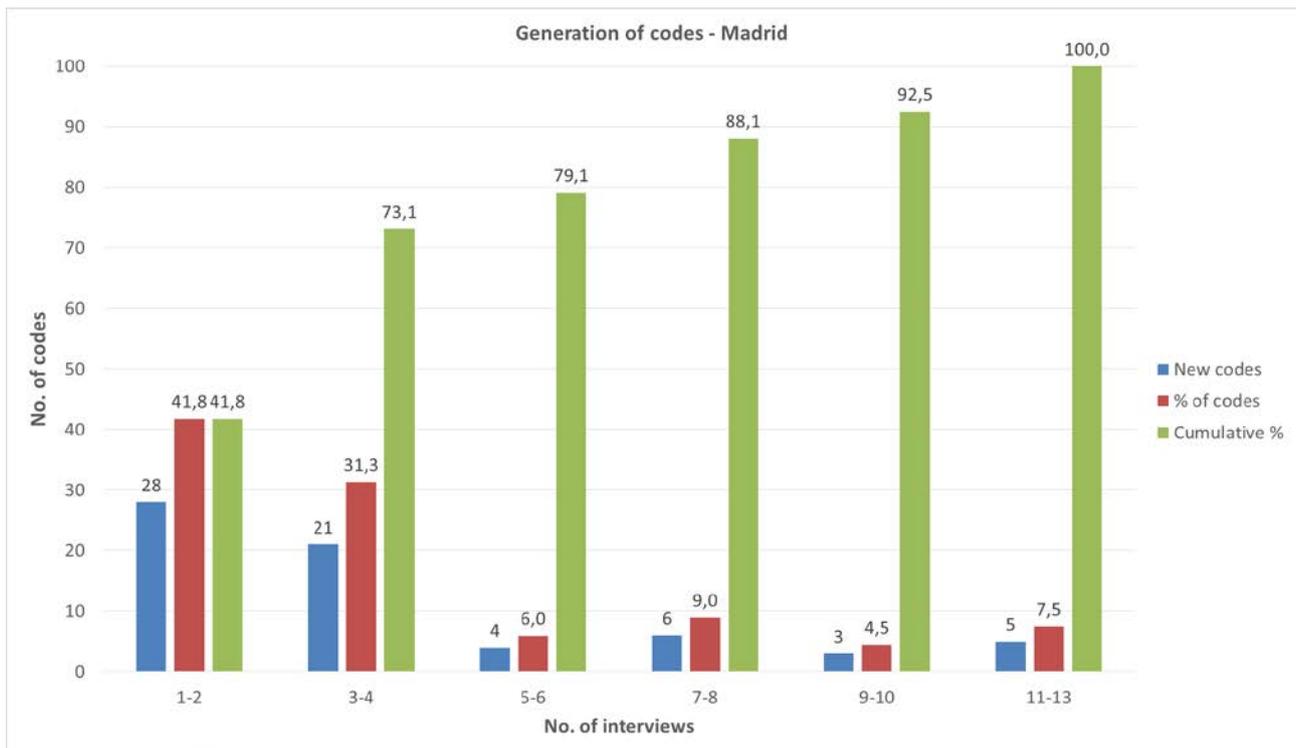


Figure 5: Code generation in the Madrid case

4.1.1 Ecology as a lifestyle

Ideas about environmental protection are the main theme in four interviews (31% of the total) in the Madrid region; people highlight their ideals in practising farming methods which are clean, traditional and respectful of the environment.

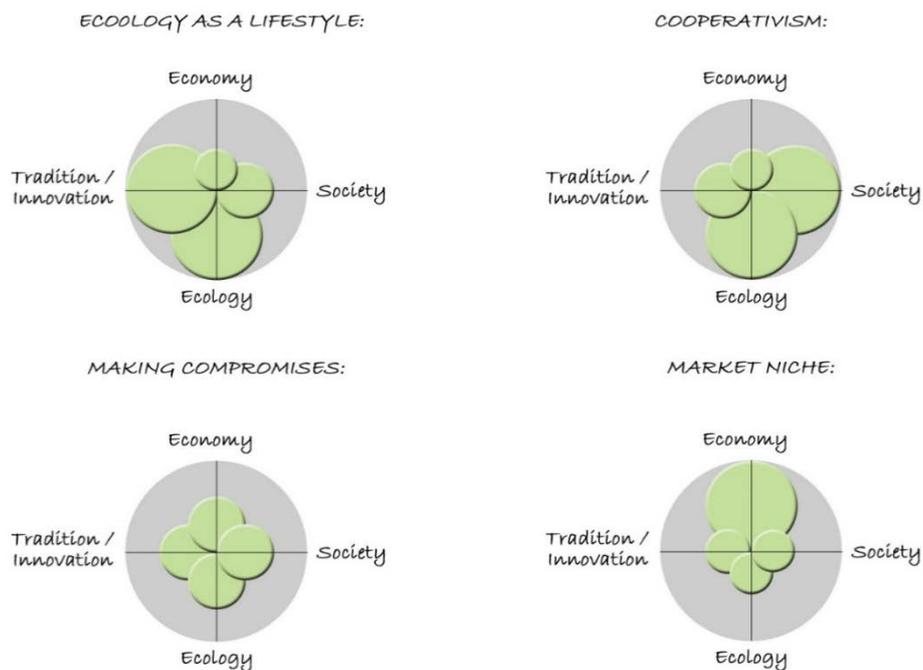


Figure 6: embeddedness styles of organic producers from the community of Madrid. Source: author.

Home et al. (2014) identify the role of *nature protectors* in their study about ecologic compensation in Swiss farms. Farming is seen as a philosophy deriving from intrinsic environmental values. These not only make external obligations uninfluential for the farming practices (farmers would continue to practise organic and natural farming even if they were not enrolled in the control body), but make economic income “as incidental or as a beneficial by-product of these environmental management activities” (Morris & Kirwan, 2011b):

“Even before of becoming organic, we always used to do extensive production”. (M4f)

“My kind of farming is not money-oriented, but for a personal maturation. It’s very gratifying. For sure I must pay bills, but what you can learn about life is what actually is valuable for you”. (M2f)

Cultural heritage is mentioned as the cause of the strong belief in green practices; in some cases, it derives from family tradition, whereas in others is related to the consumption aspect:

“I work in organic agriculture because I believe in it, my father taught me to work in this way. I’ll continue what he taught me, in addition to what I have learned during the years”. (M2f)

“Organic food is the norm; it is what we eat some years ago”. (M3m)

Concepts of biodiversity and landscape shaping are sometimes associated; vegetables varieties, used as a technique to avoid fertility exhaustion, generates also landscape improvement:

“There is a landscape enhancement; landscapes are nicer, more beautiful, and more attractive”. (M2m)

Other farmer highlights the importance of colours produced by the variety of cultivation, as a way to get a state of peace and relax. These two statements reflect the concept of *non-tangible benefits* (Home et al., 2014).

A cattle breeder explains how her farm contributes to keep safe the vocation of the territory for this type of activity; without the farm, the land would be subject to urbanisation. Even though this statement is quite radical, it shows the strong relationship between farming and environmental protection.

Health is a recurring theme; a better nutrition is one of the main reason for the customers’ choice of consuming organic food, and one of the motivation boosting the sacrifice of paying products more. During interviews, illnesses and diseases were associated to chemical products used in cultivations, and to industrial processes, which de-naturalise the organoleptic properties of fresh products and serve to maintain good appearance. The conviction of a strong relation between nutrition style and health is the reason, for some producers, to practise a clean farming and to sell organic food within the market even though is not profitable as conventional channels:

“I like eating organic products, I don’t want to go to Mercadona¹⁸ and buy their products, because it would be weird. [...] I like tasty food and not their garbage”. (M1b)

Farmers who strongly mention the environmental protection also show a very big interest in social aspects like relationship with consumers and social advantages with organisations like box schemes, thus confirming the co-existence of ecological and social embeddedness, as Penker (2006) states. Open days within the farms have the double function to increase people’s knowledge about farming practices and to give them the enjoyment of a leisure activity, in so making a re-connection between urban and rural spaces. Reflecting the general feeling of economic income as a secondary aspect respect to environmental benefits, box schemes are considered good because they make a strong relation with their farmers, which leads to the sharing of knowledge and, in the case of a farmer, to economic support:

“It’s like creating a little family; there is confidence, we speak frankly. Types of cultivations can be changed if they demand things I don’t have, or I do things that they didn’t think. I installed greenhouses two years ago, and people from the box schemes borrowed me the money”. (M2f)

This statements show how the relation between producer and consumers is not limited to a mere commodities exchange, but it is made of social relation and sharing of knowledge (Torjusden et al., 2008)

Not every farmer conceives his/her own activity in the same way; some of them link concepts of organic production and tradition, saying for example that organic farming is “conserving the agriculture as a traditional work, which has accompanied the humanity all along its evolution and development since the prehistory” (M4f). For some others the return to nature coincides with applying modern technology in a clean way:

“organic farming stands on the climax, at the top of innovation in agriculture and in the use of new technologies, because of the management of supplies, the control of plagues and diseases, [...] [for] all of these problems we need very strong training and information in order to control them; managing them in the conventional way [...] is easier. We do monitoring with colour traps, pheromones, sexual traps; this is not traditional agriculture, this is innovation and leading technology”. (M2m)

Education and knowledge are also mentioned; people who buy organic food do it because a deep awareness of environmental and health questions, and this bring not just to a single action of buying but to a more complex social conscience. Many farmers organise open days in the farm, in so developing a series of secondary activities (schools workshops, agricultural education), which make the difference respect to conventional agriculture, even though they are not directly linked to production. Moreover, visiting farms is a way to generate and reinforce the trust between producer and consumers.

¹⁸ A big Spanish supermarket chains, that accounts for more than 1500 retail stores within the Country (Mercadona, 2014).

4.1.2 Cooperativism

This category encloses only two farms, which could be included in the previous category because of their strong ecological vision. However, due to their particular business organisation (they are cooperatives) influencing their ideas, they are discussed apart.

The two cooperatives are horizontally organised, i.e. there is not a leader; decisions are taken by a partners' assembly. In one case, every partner works in the cooperative and each of them has the same voting rights; in the other cooperative, associates can be of two types: working partners and consumers partners. As the names suggest, the former contribute to the cooperative through their work, and the latter agree to spend a minimum amount per month in the shop. Moreover, people could join the cooperative as supporters. These have the same rights and duties of partners, with some exceptions (for example, they are not obligate to contribute to the stock corporation). The vote, has different weight depending to how many people (and which type of them) are participating to the assembly. Supporters' vote has a unitary weight. In any case, respect to the previous behavioural models, social interests flank ecological beliefs; here, the alterity to anomic capitalism is realised through both ecologic and social embeddedness. Indeed, it is the latter that boosts the society change and the quality turn; the interviewee belonging to Ecosecha cooperative said that

“people consider interesting that we're organised in a cooperative, [...] because is a horizontal organisation [...] where we try to make common decisions, to reach consensus. Every partner has his/her right to vote like every other one, regardless of the time he/she is enrolled in the cooperative”.

(M1f)

Moreover, in the case of Besana cooperative, the more complex structure including different types of partners allows a deeper involvement of consumers who are not merely spectators who take decisions just when they do their purchase, but in the whole production and distribution process.

During the interview, the farmer expressed the mixed nature of the cooperative, which scope is the “interaction and compromise with resources consumption, thinking about our health and our social relationships” (M3f).

As in the previous model, economic dimension is a secondary aspect, but it is not missing; even though the mission of the cooperative is realising a change of the market, this seems to influence the cooperative vision and activities. When asked why the cooperative shifted from direct selling to organic shops provisioning, the farmer partner of Ecosecha said:

“We started with selling only to end customers. We were unenthusiastic of shops because our philosophy at this time was trying to live just with direct selling. Nevertheless, forms of selling started to change and many organic shops were opened; that was interesting. We realised we had to address ourselves towards these shops, because there are many customers that do appreciate they can choose

what to buy, and do not agree with our system of organising weekly baskets. So, these people were starting to go to shops, and so did we, which is another way to sell to end customers”.

Even remaining within the boundaries of AFNs, it appears clearly that this change has been driven by the mechanism of supply and demand, in so confirming that AFNs are not alien to capitalist market, instead operating changes within the market itself (Goodman et al., 2011, p. 9).

4.1.3 Making compromises

Farmers belonging to this group make a balance among the four driving ideas, showing an attitude of compromise between an ideal situation and the reality; specifically, economy has more weight in this behavioural model than in the previous two, but this category does not predominate on the ecological thoughts, instead flanking them. Farmers practice organic and natural agriculture following a strong personal belief, but among the advantages that farming and selling styles give to them, economic income is important; thus, alterity lies not only on the creation of ecologic benefits, but also in generating a type of market in which farmers are not strangled by capitalist rules. Speaking about the ideal situation and the reality, a farmer said:

“if we were more radical, following the pure concept [of organic farming], we could improve many things [as for example] avoiding machineries and coming back to function with horses and oxen [...]. This way, we would reduce environmental impact and boost labour. However, prices would probably increase in order to produce the same quantity as now, becoming less competitive in the market. [...] In order to realise all of this, I think it is necessary a society change”. (M1b)

Sometimes, choices are constrained by the conditions under which people operate; a farmer who has joined the South East Regional Park project declared that, if he were not enrolled in the CAEM, he would practise sustainable intensive farming, using chemical products only when strictly needed (for instance, when there is an evident risk to lose the crop). Another said:

“if someone told me that tomorrow the value of organic agriculture would drop to zero, and that an organic tomato would be paid 0,10 € respect to the price of 1 € for a conventional one, in order to survive I would cultivate an organic parcel for my personal use, and a conventional part for the selling”. (M1b)

Economy interests within this group appear related to alternative forms of sale, mentioned as good sources of income. As already seen, in the former groups there is a strong opposition to long food chains, due to their scarce sustainability and to the fact that suppliers take an important part of economic income with little work. Instead, farmers who accept compromises admit that recurring to intermediate suppliers is sometimes

necessary. Indeed, direct selling and box schemes are not always sufficient in order to sell the whole production, even because sold quantities are very little. Moreover, being too radical could have counter-productive effects; direct selling with little quantities is not economic rentable and the choice to confer big quantities to suppliers is fundamental to satisfy the demand:

“if we did not supply to wholesalers, Madrid would not eat anything”! (S1b)

For some farmers, even box schemes have the same advantage of wholesalers, as they allow to sell more products than to single customers, with an immediate cash flows (whereas, in the case of shops, there are usually payment delays). This is a very big difference from the *Ecology as a lifestyle* model, where farmers refer to box schemes and other types of alternative selling from the point of view of social aspects and relation of trust between producers and consumers.

Drawing upon Geels & Schot (2007) research, these sentences show a symbiotic relationship with the system instead of contrasting it; farmers see their activity not in a radical opposition to capitalist market (aiming to realise a complete substitution), but as a modification of the system from the inside. Market can be changed, but little by little “through cumulative adjustments” (Geels & Schot, 2007, p. 407).

Farmers belonging to the South East Regional Park mention the cooperation among producers, but under the point of view of economic profitability. Indeed, whereas in the *Cooperativism* style the most important aspects were the creation of a horizontal decisional system and the active participation of consumers, here farmers conceive association as an instrument to have more market incisiveness. The cooperative could help farmers to buy expensive machinery together, to improve efficiency and have more economic power against big producers’ retails. On the other hand, a farmer suggests the creation of a cooperative where every producer would commit to cultivate his own varieties, in order to avoid competition among each other and cover a biggest slice of the market. In his opinion, the cooperative would be charged with managing the business. In these statements there is no evidence of participation ideas; the aim of the cooperative would be merely economic, without any “process of innovative behaviour” (Goodman et al., 2011, p. 48).

For people belonging to this style technologic innovation is as a way to distancing contemporary farming from the *romantic idea* that some consumers have of sustainable farming. From one hand, farmers want to live a normal life: “if people who eat organic product can use cars, why we cannot use tractors?” (M1b). On the other hand, practising traditional and radical farming – meaning forgoing machineries use, producing homemade fertilisers, etc. – could cause a shift of organic farming to an elite phenomenon, with expensive products that only rich people can afford. In this case, the compromise between the ideal situation and the reality has not an economic aim, instead highlighting that within capitalism market an excess of radicalism could have counter-productive effects.

4.1.4 Market niche

The last behavioural model has been built in order to include those farmers who, even having some interests in ecological practices and creating a different food provisioning, show a strong economy vision and, in some way, practise their activity in order to gain a niche space within the market. This behaviour is not so different from what supermarkets chains do in creating their own quality brands to gain non-price competition (Goodman et al., 2011, p. 89). Here alterity is perceived as an economic theme; a spelt producer said that he chose to dedicate a part of his land to organic agriculture because

“Madrid is a place of endless consumption. If our farm were located in León or in Badajoz we would have other circumstances. But, as we are close to Madrid we have to do organic production for human consumption. This is the key, the future. If you practise this type of production close to a place of endless consumption, you are in the best conditions, because you have an expectation of minor cost and higher price”. (M1m)

Organic agriculture works as a different type of market, because the product is better valued, also due to the closeness to a place where market potential is bigger than elsewhere. Thus, there is no possibility of replication in any place because of economic condition of the consumption point. The view of ecological benefits as drivers of economic raise of a farm is what Hinchcliffe et al. (2003) define instrumental ecologic values, found also by (Morris & Kirwan, 2011b) in their paper about grazing farms in UK. This concept of ecology as economic tool is well explained by the following sentence of the same farmer:

“if I knew or if I were conscious that [the conventional agriculture] has got impact on the environment, of course I would change my way of production; nobody wants to damage the environment in this long-term activity. You don't do this to have a good harvesting in a particular year, but to maintain a high-value and productive farm”. (M1m)

The statement makes evident the vision of farming as a economic sustainable activity. Ecological benefits are strongly economic-embedded, and environmental damages are reduced to an economic matter, because they can threaten the business profitability.

The search of a market niche is clear in the case of a cosmetic mare milk producer, who see his peculiar activity as a possibility to build a new type of business with no or little competition within the national market. In his opinion, the advantage of organic farming is that

“works in the market with a very distinctive product, which usually is not in competition with others. [...] This permits to get to worldwide markets and to [accomplish] our mission of internationalising the business”. (M4m)

In this behavioural style, social and environmental aspects of organic certification are hidden by economic orientation. For the other groups of farmers, certification is useful at least in the initial stage, with the

function of establishing trust among producer and consumers, as a guarantee of good cultivation practices, animal welfare and so on. In this case, certification only guarantee the distinctiveness of the product; in this case, on the contrary, it is evident the reification of *quality*, which from a complex concept including environmental, social, and localness values becomes a simple brand.

In the next section, position about the CAEM role are presented. Then, Sardinia case is illustrated.

4.2 Positions about the certification body

Even though a common background about farmers' opinions regarding the role of the CAEM could be found in each behavioural model, every interviewee showed ideas depending on his/her personal experience. Here, only considerations in common for each behavioural style are presented.

4.2.1 Ecology as a lifestyle

Farmers of this style shared the opinion that organic certification works as a mere brand, helping the commercialisation of products for Extended AFNs, where it is not possible to generate trust with a personal relationship. Indeed, the only farmer of this style who totally appreciates organic label owns a specialised shop (2M). This mistrust is associated with the intrinsic values shown in the interviews; many organic regulations appear insufficient or not well established, as for example the contradictory imposition of using certified seeds that are contained in the Ministry of Agriculture official list. According to many farmers, this is leading to a capitalist use of organic seeds, contrasting to the aim of improving biodiversity. In particular, seeds that are commercialised all over the world by multinational corporations, even organic, have a negative impact on biodiversity conservation, because local varieties are discarded.

Some more radical questions are typical within this style, from the point of view of both lacking measures and weak controls. It is worth to note that some of them are quite intrinsic contradictory, as the following statement:

“among the measures allowed by the CAEM (and every other organic agriculture committee in Europe, at least) there is one we don't like, the use of plastic. [...] We use it to grow strawberries, because is a creeping plant and it's the only viable way to cultivate it, [...but] if we didn't have strawberries, we would not use plastic, and for us is a very ecological way of cultivation”. (2B)

Others are more realistic, as for example the complain about the annual control; even though for some farmers it is good to be supervised by a public body, one control per year is considered insufficient to guarantee that farming practices are developed according to the rules. This is related to the previous mistrust in organic label:

“certification is not a guarantee of a good cultivation, [...] in our opinion having the seal is not completely reliable.” (2B)

Finally, some farmers would consider the organic certification more efficient if the CAEM did work more in promoting organic agriculture, highlighting the bad effects of conventional agriculture.

4.2.2 Cooperativism

The two farmers from cooperatives expressed their critics about the certification that appears incomplete from two points of view. Firstly, it does not consider social aspects, which are fundamental in AFNs characterisation. For this reason, one of the two cooperatives has in its agenda the construction of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), which would be the first in the Community of Madrid and one of the pioneers in Spain. PGS are non-official certification, including in their values aspects like woman employment, workers' rights, food sovereignty and minimisation of packaging materials.

On the other hand, the environmental aspect today considered in organic certification are incomplete; in fact, they focus on the process of production without chemical products but do not consider other aspects, for example CO2 emission or rational water use.

4.2.3 Making compromises

Within this group, opinions about CAEM are strongly dependent of personal experience; due to the mix of values, it is difficult to find a general background. Nevertheless, it is true that farmers belonging to this style did not posed questions about the committee principles, as in the previous two models; instead, they claim its organisation, excessive bureaucracy, lack of help to farmers in the implementation of agricultural measures, and rigid norms. That is to say, they focus on practical aspects of the current way of working of the committee, being not interested in its philosophy. These issues represent sometimes an obstacle to the farmers' activities, influencing its economic viability. Thus, is evident that also in this group organic certification is conceived as a brand. It is worth to note that the three farmers are part of the Soto del Grillo park, where one of the project conditions was the mandatory enrolment to the CAEM. The stronger focus on economy could also have influence on these aspects. However, ecological values are evident, for example in the theme of certified organic seeds as in the first model.

4.2.4 Market niche

In this model, opinions about CAEM are strongly driven by economic profit. The certification is seen just a form of indirect publicity, without which the product would have not an added value. Two of the three interviewees did not continue with organic production if they would not be certificated; one said he would do for a personal belief, but at the same time, he declared that “organic agriculture is a great invention from the marketing point of view” (M4m), and the certification is a way to introduce distinctive products in a

growing and specialised market. Even though some typical problems seen before are also present here, they are discussed differently. For example, the lacking connection between CAEM and producers; for one farmer (M1m) issues do not lie in a missed share of information about methods, but in the difficult to reach consumers due to his not of-direct-consumption product (the spelt); the CAEM should give help in promoting product commercialisation.

4.3 Sardinia: Alternative Food Network producers

Of the 18 interviewees, four are not certified as organic and one is within the certification process. Four of them practise a *de facto* organic farming, whereas the last practises integrated farming¹⁹, declaring that under the law this farming practice is not compatible with organic certification. Five of the interviewees participate to the weekly organic farmers’ market that take place in Nuoro, a town in the centre of the island.

Saturation was reached the 16th interviews, with a 95% of the total codes (fig. 7).

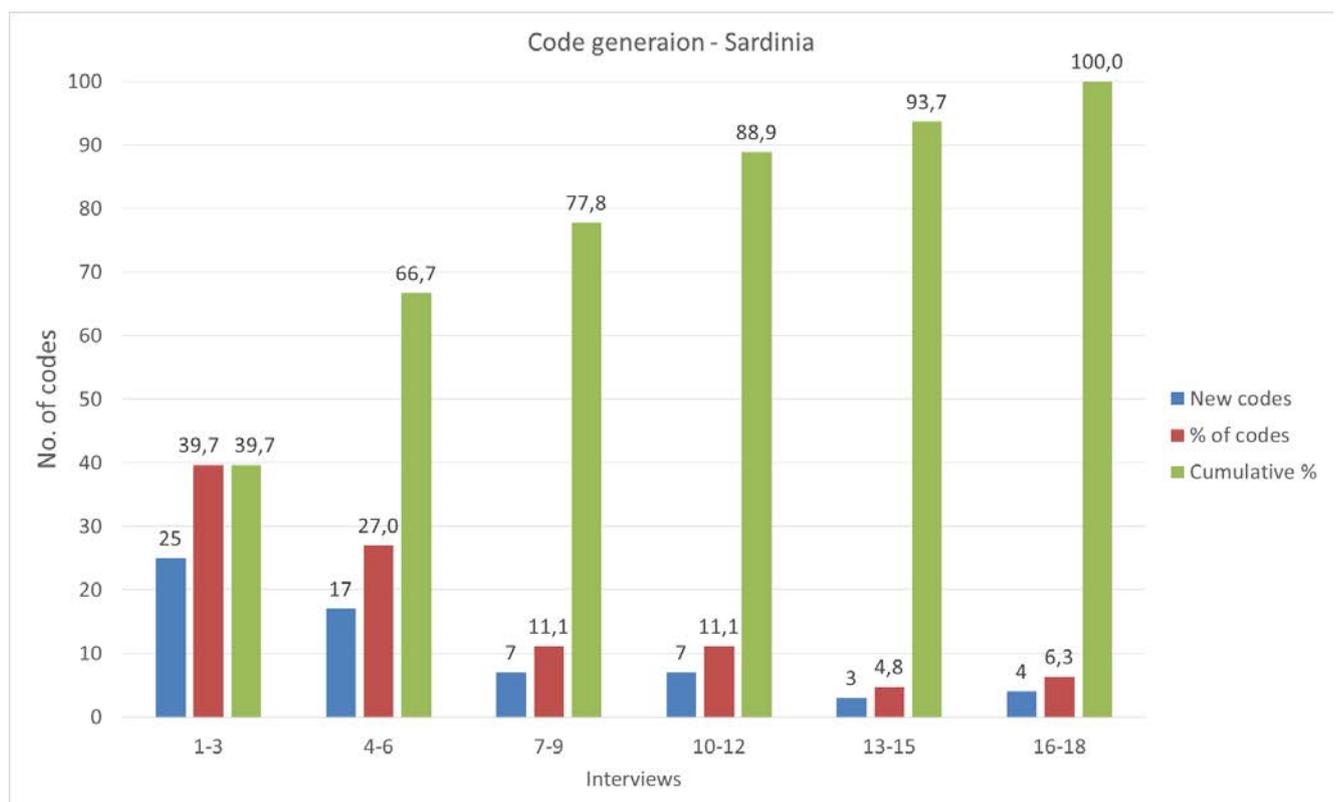


Figure 7: Code generation in the Sardinia case

The codification process conducted to results that are similar to which of the Madrid model. However, the category related to tradition and innovation is not present; codes about traditional methods and cultural

¹⁹ As defined by the International Organisation of Biological Control (IOBC), integrated farming is “a farming system that produces high quality food and other products by using natural resources and regulating mechanisms to replace polluting inputs and to secure sustainable farming” (WPRS, 2004).

heritage have been found, but they are less strong and numerous than in the Spanish case. Instead, producers show firm ideas about food re-localisation, pointing strongly to the need of developing customers' awareness of the food origin (Cook et al., 1998; Morris & Kirwan, 2010) and to build an idea of territory as "a socio-cultural construction that participants in the local food networks" (Sonnino, 2007). Four behavioural models have been built, and they are shown in figure 8.

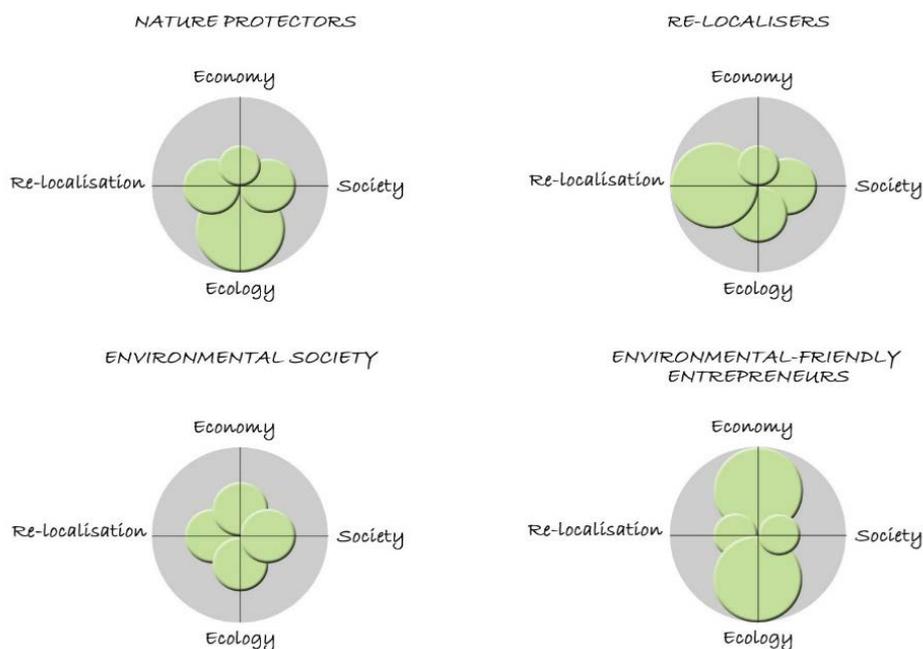


Figure 8: embeddedness styles of AFNs producers from Sardinia. Source: author.

4.3.1 Nature protectors

Interviews that are characterised by a strong ecological vision share many aspects with the *Ecology as a lifestyle* group from the Madrid region, but it is worth a critic discussion about similarities and differences between the two styles. An important point in common is that practising environmental-friendly farming is a personal feeling; a certified farmer said, "it is not a question of choice among different types of treatments, but a cultural lifestyle that basically avoids any chemical intervention on the cultivation, even when they are allowed by the law". (S12m)

Even farmers who are not enrolled in certification body and practise different types of farming (biodynamic, integrated, etc.) share this vision. As noted by Home et al. (2014), things that firstly are realised in accomplishment to the normative, during time can generate some positive effects that make easier continuing practising this type of farming:

"in my farm we noted that by not fertilising the soil, we have eliminated some sheep diseases like lameness" (S4m)

As in the Madrid case, environmental-friendly attitudes derive, in some cases, from familiar history. However, respect to the Spanish case, farmers recognise that Sardinia actually has never totally abandoned traditional agriculture, which is the driving sector in the island (INEA, 2009):

“in my opinion, we have always produced organic. Maybe that is due to ignorance, because some things have never arrived here. [...] Especially for vegetable plants we don’t need to focus on mass production, we don’t need calibrated products. So, some treatments have never arrived here”. (S5m)

Biodiversity is another common theme, but with a different emphasis; as seen before, Spanish farmers relate biodiversity with landscape shaping, colours and plantation diversity. In the Sardinia case, even though some farmers mention the importance of landscape, biodiversity is broadly expressed through the improvement of useful insects and wild plants:

“since we are here, we have seen a growth of useful insects year by year. [...] Before, with the weeding, just some types of grass used to grow. Now, we can say that there is an improvement of weeds diversification”. (S1f)

“within my farm, I take care of the equilibrium of insects. Insects exist because they have a function; they are not be invented to annoy farmers. Everyone does his work”. (S9m)

The reason of this could be found in the strong difference between the two regions; Sardinia is a low-populated and rural-classified region, whereas Madrid is high-populated region, with an important urban territory. This distinction could influence the perception of the landscape by people, being more or less accustomed to live surrounded by natural landscapes. In any case, there is evidence of a broader biodiversity conception in the case of Sardinia.

Health is one of the driving forces that engendered and continue to boost the organic choice; the integrated farming producer tries to practice a “good conventional” (S1m) agriculture in using as far as possible natural treatments (and in strictly respecting pre-harvest intervals when a chemical intervention is needed). He said nobody knows whether what he/her eat has been treated or not, because

“the medication is odourless and flavourless... nobody can realise it. But your body do realise it little by little, while accumulating particles day by day... at the end all of this comes into something. Here is why, recently, we have heard of many cases of cancer. [...] For this reason, we have our chickens, and I know what they eat. We have our pigs, only for my family, I produce vegetables and I know how I do... in my house, our products”. (S1m)

The statement shows a relation between production and consumption where the sustainable and environmental production is the consequence, and not the cause, of the consumption choice. Moreover, this is a practical case of how “the struggle over questions of knowing food [...] involve more than merely make the system more transparent” (Goodman et al., 2011, p. 46).

Social aspects are present, but not as strongly as in the Madrid case. Indeed, discussions about box schemes, social relationships and trust generation strongly emerged in the *Environmental society* group, after discussed.

4.3.2 Environmental society

This category encloses producers who show mixed ideas; environment, social aspect, and food re-localisation coexist with economic vision. This behavioural style could be associated with the Madrid *Making compromises* group, with some differences.

Apart from environmental aspects, quite similar to the *Nature protectors* style, education is an important point; many farmers highlight the loss of food habits, suggesting education initiatives as a solution. Visiting farms in order to see how food is produced, local initiatives organised by farmers, and schools involvement are seen as a fundamental tool in order to change the society and to create new consumption styles. Farmers are not just food producers but feel as environmental educators whose aim is to transmit lost knowledge to future generations and realising a new society.

Different degrees of consumers involvement allow them to participate in sharing knowledge; degrees depend on what the single farmer has decided to act in order to promote his/her product. A honey producer, for example, realising that honey has no big consumption in the territory where she produces, decided to organise a course to teach people how make sweets using honey instead of sugar, importing this tradition from Barbagia (the central region of Sardinia, where she was born). The reaction of people has been enthusiastic, and in her opinion there is

“the possibility to enlarge the business even through this type of initiatives. [This make possible] to know the product from the organoleptic point of view, its composition... this must be accessible to everyone,; for this reason in these courses I not only teach how to use honey, but even how to know it according to the use you want . If you have to cook it, how to do it, and how to store it”. (S2f)

Another producer is thinking of organising didactic activities with children, to show them how agriculture works, through visiting the farm instead of going to a supermarket, in order to make them fall in love with nature and environmental-respectful methods.

For a cheese producer who, in recent years, has started production of myrtle and thyme flavoured *pecorino* (a typical Sardinian goat cheese) as unique product, school education for food is fundamental; nowadays people have loosed gustatory perception because of standardised, flavour-flattened and undistinguished industrial products. He realised that during a fair, when a woman was tasting his cheeses. She, indicating one of the sweetest, said it was spicy:

“I said her: ‘Ma’am, it’s not spicy, it’s the taste of natural cheese! It is not my fault if you are accustomed to eat Philadelphia’. Then, she wanted to taste the spiciest. I said that it was not a good idea, because if she did that, she would continue to eat Philadelphia for the rest of her life”. (S7m)

In his opinion, school canteens should make provision of quality food, generating two advantages: children would eat good food and would be accustomed to flavours. Moreover, they would ask for these products at home, too. Thus, it is possible to enlarge the consumption of diverse products, because they are not publicised through media channels.

About good food accessibility, the honey producer explained her idea of social justice of food. Realising that niche products are expensive, she said that even she does not want to sell her honey at a loss

“a good product must be accessible to everyone. For this reason, I don’t rise prices as other producers do. [Someone] reprimands me of damaging honey market, but I think it is not fair make people who don’t have much money unable to eat good food”. (S2f)

She considers herself as “very alternative” in so doing. This ideal of justice has his counterpart in the *nature protectors* style; as well as they consider environmental protection as a mission – and economic income a secondary aspect, she has the same behaviour respect to food accessibility.

In this holistic vision of agriculture as a mix of nature and society, other aspects are considered; for example, another honey producer organises rehabilitation courses for disable people. In her opinion, farming is an activity that “produces not only food, but also benefits at the human level, getting to people rehabilitation (even though the word rehabilitation is an exaggeration)” (S5f). She sees this as innovatiuve but not a novelty, because disabled people have always existed, and farms in the past were places where they could find some occupation, even though just feeding animals or pet them. Nowadays, they are emarginated because their inability to do complex jobs; then, social farming is a great opportunity in this sense. Nevertheless, she is disappointed because in Sardinia these initiatives are not much widespread and accepted. She has travelled much in Italy and seen that in other regions social agriculture projects are organised even at policy level. She regrets this missing opportunity, because she thinks organic agriculture is very suitable to this, because of “its own ethic for environmental respect that includes respecting people”.

This synergy between environment and people care it is clear in the opinion of another social farm owner; attention to people is more important than production. For this, she would practice organic agriculture even if she were not certified: “as we work with these people, we consider essential avoiding any type of [chemical] product, at the cost of losing part of the production. Sometimes we have loosed it, but it is not important; we must give quality instead of quantity”. (S3f)

4.3.3 Re-localisers

Re-localisers are those farmers who point out aspects related to food geography, re-connection of place and food, and food stories. Only two people shows this aspect. This behavioural group could be considered a sub-case of *Nature protectors*, but as in the *cooperativism* style in the Madrid case, due to the peculiarity of re-localisation discourse, it has been chosen to present it separately.

Farmers highlight the importance of telling stories about the products origin, as is the way in which customers can value food and have a trustworthy relation with producers. This conviction is the result of personal experiences; an interviewee told how a sheep breeder he knows told him the story of his cheese. The typical day for the sheep, the paths they go through, the types of grass they eat, and the method to produce cheese were deeply described to him. At the end of the story, the interviewee wanted to buy a piece of cheese. The breeder offered him to taste the cheese before the purchase, but the interviewee refused because he was quite sure of the cheese quality. He was quite sure that price was high, too: "After the story, I said to him: 'I haven't tasted the cheese, but if you say you sell it for less than 14 Euros per kilo, I'll kill you!' The cheese has to be good, but the story had already convinced me: I was sure the cheese was special" (S9m).

Whereas in this example natural landscapes and environmental quality influence the product quality together with the process of production, another producer went further with the question of telling the origin of food. He described how the award for the best Italian olive oil of the year has given to his product from free publicity, building a fame of quality. He thinks quality should become a brand to identify the territory of origin as it happens in geographical indication, but even through spontaneous collaboration among farmers. In this case, it is not the product itself to be told, but the territory:

"marketing depends not only on the farm or on the single product; it is linked to the territory, because the majority of the factors influencing consumers' choice is related to the name of a territory as a place of production. Labels and farms history are important as intangible factors, but the attractiveness of a territory as unique place for some types of products, lifestyles and rurality model is more important".

(S1b)

This producer and his wife founded a project called *Cannonau Wine Route* (in Italian: *Le strade del vino Cannonau*), a non-profit organisation whose goal is to "pursue the achievement of historical, cultural, environmental, economic, and social identity" of the territory (Strada del Vino Cannonau, n.d.). The achievement of this goal has a series of broad-ranging actions: boost of agro-food tourism, promotion of historical and archaeological sites, support partners with bureaucracy compliances, and organisation of promotional campaigns.

This type of organisation represents a new rurality model in a territory that is suited to practise organic and natural agriculture, since "even who practises conventional farming has no need to do many chemical

intervention” (S1b) and potential economic organisations with the possibility to gain space into the international market. The farmer complains against political proposals about internationalising Sardinian market:

“when [politicians] speak about internationalisation of farms located in Orgosolo, Oliena, Mamoiada ... you are talking about nothing, about a thing that does not even exist, because... facing the Chinese market, it is difficult for the Martini company, do you think a single producer of a small village could do better? [...] [We are in] a global market where products come from everywhere, and incredible promptness for the information exchange is needed”. (S1b)

The only way to internationalise small and local farms is to create a fame for the territory, in order to bring international market actors to Sardinia and creating commercial exchanges. This is a model that already exist in other Italian regions: “the small farm producing olive oil in Val di Pesa, Tuscany, is not worried about exporting its products to China; Chinese people go to Florence”. He highlights the potential granted by restaurants all over the world that could make provision of typical and quality products from Italy.

4.3.4 Environmental-friendly entrepreneurs

The last category encloses those ideas related to a strong environmental conscience, but also heeding economic aspects. For this reason the name *Environmental-friendly entrepreneurs* has been chosen; their alterity lies in practising a business that tries not to damaging environment and human health. Other aspects as social promotion, direct contact with customers, and geographic promotion appear but with less intensity respect to the other styles.

Intrinsic environmental values influence farming practices; this is clear when, although more economic profitable measures are contemplated, the choice is on sustainability and environment respect, as in the case of a non-certified farmer:

“this year we had a problem with melons, which were being attacked by aphids. The agronomist said we had to treat with chemicals or, in turn, use ladybugs. We went hunting ladybugs, finding about 7000 of them. We put them into the greenhouse, and we solved the problem. [...] It is true we lost a whole morning searching for ladybugs, but this problem rarely happens, so we avoided using chemical treatments, also because it was dangerous for the bees that were pollinating within the greenhouse”. (S1m)

However, in some cases the choice of avoiding synthetic products has its roots in economic reasons before than ecology; as the same farmer of before explains, “without using pesticides I can save money, and at the same time guarantee a healthier product”.

This not-radical behaviour is reflected also in the conception of the quality product: “good conventional products exist, for sure. The matter is the respect of pre-harvest intervals and the right fertilisation practices” (S6m). The problem is not about the practice itself but in their excess, for example when quantity is preferred to quality and economic profit is at any cost. It is fundamental the compromise between oppositional categories as economy and ecology (or, better, human health).

The other producers reflecting this style are certified organic, and with the exception of a wine producers who agree with the position that natural is not synonym of quality and tastiness, all of them belief in the superiority of organic products, both for better flavour and for being healthy. Nevertheless, economic profit is present in their business conduction; alternative forms of selling or even organic agriculture itself are good because they represent market niches. For a woman who conducts a cooperative, direct selling allows to achieve a higher price on the product, and to sell these products that have an imperfect aspect: “it is difficult to sell tomatoes of different size in non-retail channels, because appearance is more important than organoleptic characteristics” (S1f). Another farmer explains his strategy for maintain prices fixed for the whole period of production; in some periods his products cost more than the conventional one, in some other are cheaper. Thus, considering the whole period, people who buy from him at a fixed cost spend the same amount they would pay for a conventional product, but with the advantage of quality and health. This farmer spent much time to explain how he has invented this marketing strategy when he was younger, and how it works perfectly for him. However, his ecological beliefs are as strong as the Nature protectors, for example in the comparison between the potential of soil in producing a certain quantity of plants according to its fertility, and the athletic performances of the human body:

“the conventional agriculture works like doping. You try to obtain a production from the soil that is larger than its potential. In so doing, in the long term, you are going to deplete the soil”. (S3m)

Finally, direct selling is perceived as a good way to have major profit, besides as a direct contact with consumers. Some farmers prefer this type of selling even to the provision of shops, because in that case also the owner of the shop must have his profit margin.

It is worth to briefly describe the project “adopt a chicken” (Repubblica, 2009) ran by a farmer from Nuoro, a town in the centre of Sardinia. This project reflects very well the concept of dialectic between mainstream and alternative channels, that generates “new economic spaces” (Kjeldsen & Ingemann, 2009) deriving from the continue innovation in practices by organic producers operating in local niches (Smith, 2006), who try to compete with the absorption of organic values by supermarkets. The idea works like a box scheme where a singular product is sold; upon a monthly payment, a given number of eggs per week are delivered to subscribers. The idea has registered a rapid and incredible success, with the result that from the initial number of 40 chicken, now the farmer own more than 400. He has doubled the business volume since the

beginning of the project, and the present demand would necessitate the purchase of more chickens in order to be completely satisfied.

4.3.5 Positions about the certification body

In the study case of Sardinia, opinions about certification have been uniform respect to the Madrid case. The certification is considered useful only from the marketing point of views, because is an official quality guarantee establishing trust with those consumers who could not go to visit farms, especially in the case of international market. However, many people said that they already have a trusted clientele and for this reason, the seal is useless. In the words of (Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine, 2008), Sardinian farmers seem to prefer empowerment to delegation regime. Only one producer admits that he continues to pay for the seal because Sardinia Regional administration has a specific measure of AEMs for organic agriculture (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2007).

For some producers, it is contradictory that who conducts a *clean* production must pay for the certification; instead, people who practise conventional agriculture should pay according to the polluter pays principle. Finally, few farmers affirmed they do not believe in organic certification, due to its contamination by corruption and to the clumsy way in which Italian laws are applied.

4.4 Sardinia: Conventional producers

Seven conventional²⁰ producers were interviewed in order to find what differentiates conventional and alternative forms of food production and provision. They were not divided into behavioural models, for three reasons: firstly, saturation method is not used here and, consequently, the number of interviewees is not sufficient to create a model as in the two cases analysed before. Secondly, the aim of these interviews is just to contrast the ideas of conventional and alternative farmers. Last but not least, the snowball method led to a *geographical concentration* of producers; four of them, in fact, are from Sanluri, a village in the Campidano plain within the province of Cagliari, and two from Dorgali, in the East coast of the island. This concentration, in addition to the small number of interviewees, does not guarantee statistical significance. It is worth noting that it is more difficult to get in contact with conventional farmers than with organic ones, because they rarely have a website or are included in structured databases; the use of personal acquaintances is one of the few ways to retrieve them. Nevertheless, some statements were considered fundamental for the scope of the thesis, and thus these interviews were analysed and are presented here. Instead of making reference

²⁰ It is worth to specify that here the term conventional refers both to production and to distribution methods, as it occurs in the name Alternative Food Networks, where alternative refers to both the terms food and networks (Watts, Ilbery, & Maye, 2005).

to behavioural categories, farmers' opinions are described according to the main theme that came out from the codification process, and compared with correspondent ideas or themes of alternative producers.

4.4.1 Compromise between conventional and alternative systems

When asked about the differences between conventional and organic/sustainable farming practices, three main themes appeared as pillars of farmers' ideas: i) inevitability of using chemical fertilisers and pesticides; ii) mistrust in organic certification; and iii) products traceability. About the first theme, all the interviewees highlighted that they use chemical products only when strictly necessary; they criticise farmers who, in order to do work less, do systematic treatments without assessing if they are really necessary. The high quality of the local environment is also mentioned as an advantage:

“treatments are necessary, but we try to do the bare minimum; in other regions of Italy, as for example Trentino, treatments are the triple of ours. But this is thank to the position of my land, which is very aired”.

Some farmers are enrolled in AEMs, where the use of chemicals is regulated. In any case, interviewees do show an environmentally-friendly attitude, for example saying that farming helps to “maintain land cleanliness”, or saying that

“many times we risked to lose the production, sometimes we lost it. Because we thought it would be better not to intervene, hoping to solve the problem naturally... but at the end we had to intervene”.

Farmers show also a big mistrust in organic farming, for different reasons. One of them is that organic methods produce very less quantities with respect to the conventional methods, and with higher costs. For this, organic methods are not economic viable, also considering that they require major efforts in terms of time and work. Some other farmers complain about the scarce support that the Sardinian administration gives organic farmers, compared with other regions of Italy. However, for sure the most important reason, highlighted by four interviewees, is the property fragmentation; practising organic agriculture is useless (and a waste of money) if a piece of land that is organically cultivated, is surrounded by fields where use of chemical products is allowed and practised.

The third identified exposed by farmers highlights how the conventional chains make it impossible to re-localise food. Indeed, despite the Italian law compels to put labels that indicate the origin of food, the value of the single farm products can get missing within the chain. This, in the farmers' opinions, is due to different reasons; some of them say that the label do not tell the truth, because it is changed at some point of the chain:

“I cannot transmit the value of my products; it is exploited by intermediate suppliers and by the passing from hand to hand. Intermediate suppliers do what they want, put labels they want”.

Even though this lack of honesty is not shared by all farmers, within the conventional market products are conferred to food storage centres, where the diverse provenance of products anonymises the history of their territory of origin and their production process. For some interviewee, this is in part the fault of farmers, who pay attention only to economic profit; for this reason, since he belongs to a producers association, the interviewee tries to highlight the importance of traceability, saying that it is possible to make it strong:

“I want to transmit the diverse nature of our work; the wheat you are sowing, producing, harvesting, will transform in a pasta that you can proudly say is yours in some way. If we will, we have the possibility to trace the product; if not for every producers, at least for each place of origin. If we decide to produce traceable lots, every producer could recognise him/herself into the pasta we sell”.

For another farmer, traceability has not only economic advantages, but can boost rural development. He said that when people are able to know what they are eating, and which place the food comes from, they gain in awareness about the value of agriculture and farmers’ work, and transmit this awareness to new generations.

4.4.2 Economy influence and large-scale retail trade

Farmers exposed their explanation of how economy influence their production choices. This influence works is expressed from three points of view: i) economic viability of organic production; ii) difficulties in competing with international markets; and iii) consumers’ preferences and food habits.

The theme of organic production is linked to economic viability, whether there is or not the will of practising it. Some farmers say that they have no intention to convert their farm to organic production, because it is too expensive in terms of insufficient productive output, that is the reason for which the product should be sold at a higher price. For others, there is an insufficient economic support from regional administration to promote organic production. On the other hand, as a farmer said, conventional production does not coincide to unscrupulous use of chemical products, but this is due to a strong economic discourse:

“we do a semi-organic farming, because the price of products for treatments has increased incredibly, and the only way to defend ourselves is to buy them as less as possible”.

“we have not the urge of using chemicals, because they are expensive; their use is determined not only by necessity, but also by [farm] economy”.

Finally, a farmer expressed mistrust in the idea that organic production could have a great diffusion than the conventional one, because “if all of us do it, nobody will sell anymore”.

In addition, the adhesion to AEMs or the intention to convert farms to organic production are driven by a strong economic vision. In case of sod seeding agriculture, it is permitted to save money due to a lower requirement for machinery. Moreover, this agricultural practice needs less human effort as well. For other two farmers, conversion to organic production is desirable, because despite the decreased production, the

income is higher than conventional farming and because during the first years of conversion, economic support is granted.

The second theme regards the competitiveness of Sardinia in the international markets; the opening of a common European market has caused damages to the Sardinian market. From one hand, the region has a considerable amount of production and a scarce population; this makes an unbalance between demand and supply. This is made even worst by the import of food from other countries whose market is more stable and can offer more economic convenient products. Once-renowned Sardinian products, as for example artichokes, are gradually loosing market shares due to less expensive products from Spain and the Mediterranean Africa. Two farmers express contrasting ideas about farmers' markets; the first said that local markets are a good thing, but they are costly in terms of time and effort. For the other, who adheres to the Italian network called *Campagna Amica*, direct selling has the advantage of getting rid of the merchandise very quickly, and with a quickly available income.

Finally, some considerations about consumers' preferences are expressed; even though interviewees recognise the major attractiveness of organic products, they mistrust in a real effectiveness, because in times of economic crisis, people pay attention to prices more than the quality. For this reason, conversion to organic certification is considered very risky, also in the light of the above-mentioned lack of support from local administrations. Despite this, a farmer showed his willing to sell his little production of legumes only through direct selling or to the SPG because he is against large-scale retail trade.

Some contradictions in consumers' behaviours are highlighted, as for example the fact that people want genuine products, but they complain if fruit is maggoty.

4.4.3 Environment and quality

Farmers showed ecological embeddedness when they were asked to describe how they conduct their farm. Despite the occasional use of chemicals, needed when there is an urgent need to fight diseases, they recognise that the natural conditions of the Sardinian territory, where the green revolution has not developed completely as in other places, make it easier to recur to natural farming. Some of them highlights that chemicals are not so bad, if used rationally: he owns a vineyard and he started to use herbicides. Paradoxically, he has seen an improvement of useful insects, and for this reason he does not see chemicals as a bad thing at all.

Benefits of practising natural methods are recognised: a farmer adhering to AEMs, said that since he has started cultivation rotation, he needs less chemicals treatment. Another farmer highlighted that he has always used natural methods, whereas he started using other natural methods as a consequence of the AEMs regulation. Finally, even though in general the better quality of organic products is recognised, some interviewees stated that the food taste is not prerogative of organic products, but also of conventional food

with a suitable use of pesticides and herbicides. Natural methods may imply a decrease in the use of machineries versus a preference to human effort.

4.5 Websites analysis in the Soto del Grillo Rural park

Table 10 and figure 9 show schematically which values are expressed in the websites. Each theme (space, ecology and society) is discussed below, with some references to the interviews in order to compare how the themes are discussed from the personal and commercial point of view.

		w1	w2	w3	w4	w5	w6	w7
Geo-historical	Family	x					x	
	Heritage/Trad.						x	
	Tourism			x				
	Landscape			x				x
Naturalistic	Natural methods	x	x			x		x
	Soil		x		x			x
	Energy		x	x			x	
	Biodiversity		x	x	x		x	x
	Landscape			x			x	
Socio-economic	Certification	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Education			x	x		x	x
	Health		x		x	x	x	x
	Economic Advantages for Business		x	x				x
	Social Goals		x			x	x	x
Settings for use	Cooperation				x			x
	Recipes				x			

Table 10: values expressed within the producers' websites, Soto del Grillo Park. Source: author.

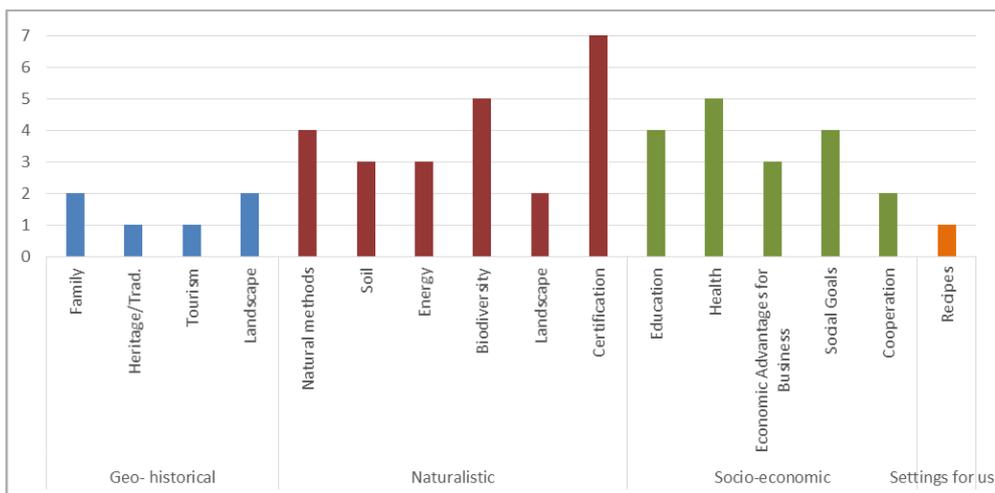


Figure 9: values expressed in the websites of the Soto del Grillo Agro-ecological Park. Source: author.

4.5.1 Space: Geo-historical knowledge

According to Morris & Kirwan (2010, p. 134), “the geo-historical knowledges are evident in the repeated use of references to history and tradition, as well as geographic designation that reinforce the special qualities of the area in which the farm is located”.

Space and history are scarcely mentioned within the websites, as in the interviews. Moreover, questions about local varieties and climate are totally absent. However, it is interesting to note that two websites mention the park and its surroundings, which in the interviews were not treated. One website dedicates few lines to this description, even though in a quite evocative way:

“the farm is located in Soto del Grillo, a kitchen garden blooming within the boundaries of Rivas, to the edge of the Jarama river. It is a natural setting extending in the shade of Piul cliffs, embedded in the South-East Regional Park”. (w6)

The other website, instead, allots a large space to the description of the landscape where the farm is located, also through panoramic images (figure 10); landscape beauty is used to promote field activities as riding, biking and walking tours, with the possibility to know better the flora and fauna of the South-East Regional Park:

“the whole region belongs to the natural protected space “South-East Regional park”, which is characteristic for being a place of shelter and reproduction for protected avifauna in its many lagoons, as for some botanical peculiarity vegetal species existing in the zone”. (w3)

The website also describes a project that wants to create a *Madrid kitchen garden route*, a path that would go over the municipalities belonging to the zone. Finally, there is little reference to how the region was historically suitable to agricultural uses:

“region of agricultural beauty and richness, shaped as a big valley with fertile irrigated plains embedded among gypsum hills and cliffs. In the past it formed the Madrid kitchen garden, whereas nowadays fodder and cereals (corn) cultivations predominate”. (w3)



Figure 10: a lagoon within the South-East Regional Park. Source: www.vegafertil.es. Accessed: November 2015

Unlike the interviews, websites do not mention specific climate characteristics of the zone influencing cultivation; history is absent, too, although there are some historical monuments very close to the park, as for example, *La ermita del Cristo*, a monastery of the XVII century. Instead, there are some references to the familiar dimension, in the form of stories about how the farm was founded and the reason of the farm ideology (w6), and as a justification for the product quality due to the exclusive participation of the farm workers to production and distribution processes (w1).

4.5.2 Ecology: naturalistic knowledge

Being a way to promote commodities, websites point quite enough in explaining the whole process of production and in what makes the difference with respect to conventional farms. These themes are treated in websites in a similar way with respect to interviews, with the exception of water management, which is absent. On the contrary, energy is a highlighted question; three websites report the advantages of cultivating seasonal, local vegetables and fruit. This choice determines a lower use of energy than in the conventional chains, in addition to the fact that products are fresh and tasty.

Biodiversity is a recurring theme but, in opposition to interviews, is always in general terms and in association with the explanation of what is organic farming. However, links between biodiversity and landscape could be found in field images (figure 11). The use of local varieties is associated to the recovering of the know-how from the local farmers (w6).

One website dedicates a quite long explanation on the utility of cultivation rotation and, above all, on its effects on the maintenance of soil fertility.



Figure 11: association of vegetables evoking agricultural landscape improvement. Source: <http://ecosecha.blogspot.com.es/>. Accessed: November 2015

All the websites declare their enrolment in organic certification. This observation confirms what farmers said during the interviews, that is, if certification is not useful in order to generate trust with customers in direct selling²¹, it is an essential instrument to guarantee quality and freshness in distance sales.

4.5.3 Society: socio-economic purposes

Websites make a large use of social and economy-related issues, in order to highlight the *alterity* of the business with respect to the capitalist market rules (Goodman, et al., 2011). Very few differences have been found between interviews and online contents; the only category that is not mentioned is the diversification of the supply with respect to other producers, which is understandable in the light of the fact that each website promote its own business. The same reason could be considered an explanation related to the minor presence of references to cooperation among farmers.

It is interesting, on the other hand, to see how some websites mention issues related to economic advantages for organic farmers; the choice of eating organic food boosts little and familiar businesses, toward a society change that could contrast the effects of the green revolution, which gave power to big corporations:

“during the green revolution, hordes of farmers all over the world emigrated to cities, depopulating fields, expelled by big combine harvesters and immense tractors that make people unnecessary”. (w3)

Land consolidation, introduction of hybrid seeds and rise of supplies (fertilisers, fungicides) brought farmers to multinationals. This has created a society that is distant from the productive dimension, depending on big enterprises for food provision (w3). Organic farming is seen as the right answer to these issues, as it

²¹ Perhaps because people value their relationship with producers and can try by themselves the product quality.

“goes with social ethic, because: protects rural life and agricultural culture; creates jobs positions; gives back to farmers the management of their land, who do not depend on big corporations anymore; defends farmers, who receive a right salary” (w2).

Finally, websites promote visits to farms in order to re-connect people with the agrarian world, and sometimes this mixes up with tourism and business promotion (w3). One farm (w6) offers periodically workshops in school and hospitals about organic farming.

4.5.4 Setting for products use

The last category is realised by “images of products ready to be eaten in such a way that gives a sense of celebration” (Morris & Kirwan, 2010). Images of places of consumption are also included, with the goal of highlighting the distinctive characteristics that can justify their higher price in respect to simple standardised and retail food.

Recipes or simple advises are the most common ways in order to achieve this goal; the distinctive characteristics of food, as for example its texture, or taste, due to the method it has been produced by, can be exalted through special cooking, condiments, and combinations with other foods.

In the case of the Soto del Grillo, only one websites has a section dedicated to recipes. No one shows images of ready dishes. The reason could be that the farms belonging to the park produce vegetable and fruit only.

4.6 Websites analysis in the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano

Direct selling within the farm is conducted by 14 farms, whereas 11 of them assure also catering and/or accommodation services as well. Three farms work with SPG.

The overall results have been displayed in table 11 and figure 12. Table 11 highlights the values expressed for each website, whereas the diagram contains the totals for each category (ecology, territory, and society).

Geo-historical	History				x	x			x	x	x	x			x	x			x	x	x	x	x
	Family	x			x			x	x				x			x			x				
	Heritage/Trad.	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Territory		x		x			x								x	x			x	x		
	Tourism			x		x																	
	Landscape							x		x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Architecture		x		x			x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x				x	x
Naturalistic	Methods	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Water						x						x										
	Soil							x															
	Health	x						x						x	x	x		x					
	Energy			x	x															x	x		
	Biodiversity						x				x										x		
	Landscape		x		x						x								x	x	x		
Socio-economic goals	Mark		x	x	x	x																	
	Certifications	x	x			x							x		x	x					x	x	
	Didactic		x		x	x		x		x	x				x		x					x	
	Econ. advantages					x														x			
	Social goals						x				x		x								x	x	
	Coop			x		x	x				x										x	x	
Setting for use	receipts	x	x	x			x		x														
	advices		x				x	x														x	
	history	x				x		x															

Table 11: values expressed within the producers' websites, Parco Milano Sud. Source: author.

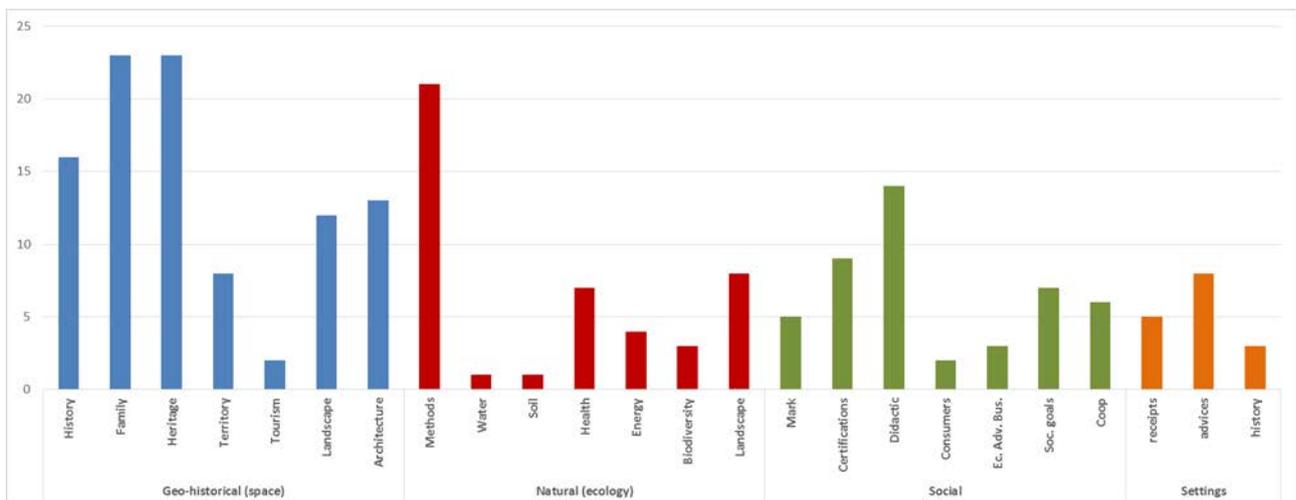


Figure 12: values expressed in the websites of the Parco Agricolo Milano Sud. Source: author.

4.6.1 Space: geo-historical knowledge

As it can be seen, this is the most highlighted category. Family and heritage from past generations (or ancient populations) are the codes with the most references. Long-standing traditions are cited as synonyms of quality:

“the Cornalba family boasts a multigenerational dynasty of farmers, documented since 1870; quality is tradition of our family”.

Sometimes traditions are interrelated only with family history, often presented through a detailed description of each member and his/her personal experience, even though not related with food production. Family dimension, religious and moral values are presented as solid bases for the quality of the production activity; the reader is persuaded that products are embedded in this strong personal experience:

“the first familiar business, located in *Nosedo*, dates back to 1875 near the *Chiaravalle* Abbey, where great-grandfather Gaetano gave birth to eight children; one of them was Grandfather Adolfo, born in 1912. [...] They were times plenty of sacrifices; inflexibility and solid religious and moral bases were mitigated by a deep and mutual familiar love”.

In order to make customers aware of the quality of food's places of origin, some websites link history to soil fertility, for example through etymologic descriptions:

“the toponym *Maiocca* has unknown origins, but according to the dialectical tradition of *Medaglia* town, old people recognise it as a synonym of *old soil*, meaning fertile soil. In fact, the zone was washed by many karst springs that used to guarantee fresh forages; today, many of them are abandoned or buried”.

In this sentence it is clear how the *quality turn* (Goodman, 2003) is created by a tale that has nothing to do with food, being an historical construction for the creation of “unique ecological and historic qualities of a place” (Sonnino, 2007, p. 27).

Many websites dedicate room to the description of typical architecture and the recovery of typical old buildings.

“historical news of our rural complex are known from the year 1300: during centuries, along with the evolution of agricultural technologies, restorations, renovations, and new constructions came in succession, modifying the business unit shaping it as it can be seen by tourists today”.

Sometimes, descriptions are completed by photos and descriptions of the whole restoration process, showing a “before and after” comparison. Architecture is conceived as a key part of the quality of places, and together with typical cultivations contributes to shaping the landscape (figure 13); this is also a form of promotion for the agritourism and catering activities conducted by some farms:

“the farm centre is located in an area of incredible water abundance; initially, it included the Scanna mill and even today, five-karst springs pass through the farm plots. The surrounding landscape is typical of Lombardy Po valley, where there is still alternation among arable land like corn, barley and soy, and woods with centuries-old trees: oak, hornbeam, elm, and wild cherry-tree. Rice cultivation, turning yellow within the fields at the end of summer offers an unbelievable natural spectacle, above all at the sunshine”.

The anthropocentric connotation of landscape, in line with the definition of ELC, clearly emerges from the analysis. The present morphology of the territory is a concrete sign of human activity, not only in terms of typical architectures, but also referring to ancient infrastructure like paths or roads connecting old settlements (figure 14).

Finally, tourism and territory are only touched on, sometimes together. Four farms are park points, places that are located all along the park area managed by businesses, societies, and non-profit organisations, where information about the park resources and patrimony are given. Educational and recreational activities are also periodically organised (Parco Agricolo Sud). These functions are well synthesized in the following sentence, highlighting their function of “communication channel” between the park institution and citizens:

“[the aim of the park points] is to put in contact citizens with the park, not only in order to establish presences in accessible and populated places, but also to open up a new, widespread and more direct communication and participation channel”.

Tourist infrastructure is used to promote the farm businesses; in one of the analysed websites, the first provided information is related to its location within a pedestrian and bicycle path called “LET4 - Terre d’acqua e cascine” (LET4 - Lands of water and farmhouses). The Landscape Expo Tours is a project developed by the Metropolitan Interests Association (in Italian: Associazione Interessi Metropolitan, AIM), the Cariplo foundation and Studio LAND Milano with the sponsorship of EXPO Milan.



Figure 13: the Comazzo fountain.

Source: <http://www.lafontanadicomazzo.it/Fontana.htm>. Accessed: November 2015

Its scope is to promote tourist access within the park for the knowledge improvement of the landscape “of the land, located to the West of Milan, all around the Expo area” (Landscape Expo Tour).

4.6.2 Ecology: natural knowledge

“Naturally-embedded origins” of food characterise this category, recognising “the critical place of the environment, nature and biodiversity within these knowledges” (Morris & Kirwan, 2010, p. 136). This type of knowledge is less used in respect to the geo-historical one.

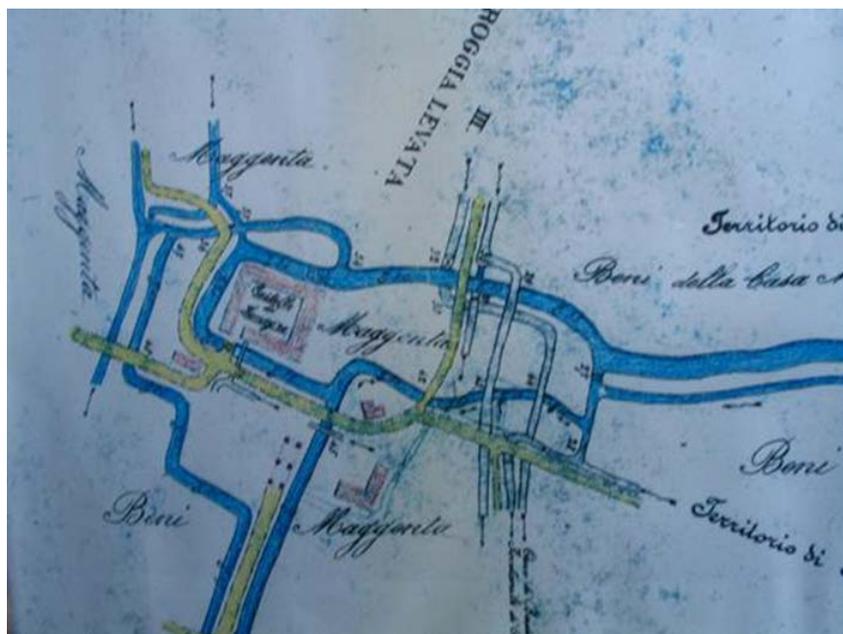


Figure 14: map showing ancient roads surrounding the farm. Source: <http://www.cascinafemegro.it/>. Accessed: November 2015

The most referenced sub-category is about production methods, which spread from cultivation rotation and animal welfare, to organic production and craftsmanship-related elaboration and packaging. These methods

are often related to the typical Lombardy tradition, showing a strong relation between quality of places and quality of food. Many farms have a shop inside the property. By doing so they implement direct selling as their typical form of distribution. Very often there is a long and deep description of methods, above all transformation and packaging.

Health is another core theme, highlighted mainly through food's nutritional properties; for example, two honey producers highlight their food properties as natural sweetener and energetic food. The issue of sugar is also mentioned by another farm in the explanation of jam production:

“during the good season, we harvest the fruit to make excellent fruit compotes, with very little sugar. In this way, fragrance and nourishment are guaranteed. [...] Our steam extracted fruit juices are totally sugar free”.

Other two websites focus on the advantages of raw milk for the organism, highlighting its chemical and microbiological characteristics; a certain contrast to conventional distribution is evident when it is specified that skimming, homogenisation, pasteurisation and filtration are typical processes of industry.

It is interesting to see how the sub-category landscape is treated under the naturalistic vision, in respect to how the same theme is emphasized within the geo-historical knowledge. Within the naturalistic knowledge, landscapes are mainly described referring to their characterisation of beauty, peace and relax, in so being embedded into the neo-romantic approach of the XIX and early XX centuries. In this sense, references to landscape seem to be oriented to the construction of the farm appeal, considering that most of them are agritourism and/or offer touristic services (restaurants and rooms). For sure, some statements are only aimed to this scope:

“we propose a cocktail within the garden greenery, while from the background the paddies tranquillity and the birds chirping is harmonised to the singing of the river that flows next to our mill”.

“during the spring, the colour blots painted by the 60000 dog-roses bushes are real carpets of white flowers... prelude to the spectacular red berries that in the late summer/autumn offer an amazing sight of these cultivations”.

However, some references to biodiversity and recovering of rare varieties are also present, as well as projects about the environmental recovering of the region, and the combination of useful weeds (like common poppy or fleur-de-lis) within cereal fields. In some cases, the Park is named as an example of peri-urban relaxing place, where rural life is seen as juxtaposed to stressful, frenetic metropolitan life.

Questions about biodiversity are emphasised in a few websites; in two cases, they focus on the importance of planting hedgerows all along the fields in order to improve the presence of beneficial insects. Other two cases are about the cultivation, within the farm, of lost local varieties. Animals' repopulation is another theme:

“in order to reach the goal of creating an ideal environment suitable to aquatic birds, vast lacustrine and marshy areas have been created; those humid areas for millennia have been the real characterisation of this zone. Now, these areas have come back to attract and protect innumerable bird species, for the pleasure of *Il Visconte* and school groups visiting the farm”.

Energy issues are mentioned by four websites; some farms use alternative energies such as photovoltaic panels or hydroelectric energy. One website explains the advantage, in terms of energy conservation, of crop rotation because of the better land texture that permits makes it easy to work the soil. Finally, water and soil are the less mentioned categories; it is interesting to note that in the two references to water, there is an implicit link to history and/or territory, specifying, in one case, that the farm has been rich in water since ancient time, and the five karst springs that exist within the property today are concrete sign of that. In the other case, it is explained that the water used to irrigate comes from the *Naviglio Grande* and the *Ticinello*, two historical canals of Milan.

4.6.3 Society: socio-economic purposes and compromises

This category refers to aspects, actions, and initiatives that are presented as seeds for a different type of society; educational in-farm initiatives, references to trust between producers and consumers, models of production that guarantee the right system in which producers are well remunerated for their job, are a way to change the society. In the words of (Goodman, et al., 2011, p. 7), the potential of “innovative organisational forms” in “reconfigure[ing] the values, time-space relations, and structures of governance of everyday food provision and the global trading systems” is fully expressed.

Certification’s references have been included here, distinguishing between the category “mark” (that refers to the mark label “Environmental Quality Producer”), and “certifications”, i.e. other labels, belonging to rural districts, awards, and so on.

Only five websites make some references to the mark; sometimes there is a long and deep description of it (reporting, for example, a newspaper article or the mark description contained within the Park’s web-page), but in the majority of cases only the label image or its name is shown. Other certifications, instead, are well described and presented. There are many of them, spreading from the organic label to local quality association (figure 15).



Figure 15: list of quality and association marks. Source: www.aziendaagricolacornalba.it. Accessed: November, 2015

Educational initiatives are mentioned in 13 web pages. The teaching farm is the most used formula in order to improve knowledge about food production and good nutrition practices. Four websites present generic initiatives, whereas in the other eleven there is a precise explanation of the related contents; two farms organise riding classes and activities with horses:

“Horses are marvellous creatures, extremely sensitive and, for this reason, it is necessary to know their psychology to get close to them and learn how to live and make relations with beings that are different from humans”.

Six farms propose thematic paths for didactic activities; some of them are organised according to the age of the participants; others have a theme related to a specific product supply chain (rice, milk, and honey), natural elements (water) or even animals (the cycle of bees). Two farms insert historic and architectural aspects into their paths; one explains the farm universe through two paths, starting from its history (including a museum of rural art and traditions), and passing through the architectural visit of the old buildings belonging to the property. Finally, festivals linked to rural traditions (feast of St. Anthony’s fire and *Ticinello* festival) are organised by a farm located near the city of Milan.

Some social goals, sometimes not strongly related to food production, complete the farm supply; a farm organises activities for disabled, highlighting how the farm could be stimulating for them. Another website dedicates a section to explain the farm involvement in a microcredit project; every month, part of the income is devolved to rural development and farm activities support in developing countries.

Cooperation among producers is mentioned by referring to the need to get products not available within the farm, specifying that the imported products are brought from farms sharing the same values, or belonging to the Park, or simply from local farms. In two cases, some references about the differences with big retailers are mentioned.

4.6.4 Setting for product uses

Five farms use recipes, and all of them are related to rice, one of the typical food of Lombardy and the base of the classic dish of Milan, the *risotto alla Milanese* (saffron risotto). It must be noted that some websites highlight not only the chemical and nutritional qualities of rice but also tell about its history and its integration in the Po Valley culinary tradition:

“Did you know that, all around the world, one in two people uses to eat rice? [...] Its versatility is the result of the diligence of an entire Country during centuries: Italy, in fact, is the European country with the biggest rice production. We have selected the best variety of this product, which a rich gastronomic tradition has risen around, often ‘designed’ by famous chefs”.

Sometimes, together with the description of the farm products, there are some advices about its preparation, as well as pictures showing a ready dish (figure 16).

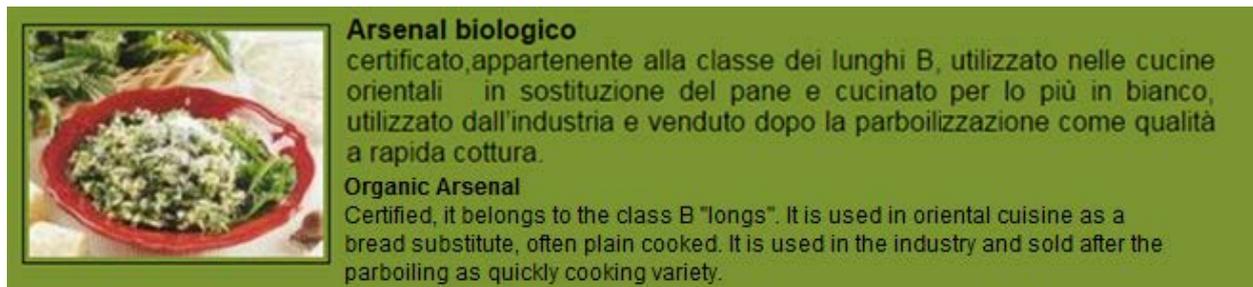


Figure 16: example of visual and textual setting for use. Source: www.agricolazunico.com. Accessed: November, 2015

4.7 Likert scale questionnaires

Over the 18 farmers asked to fill in the Likert-scaled questionnaire, only seven answered. Two of them put a +3 (strongly agree) to almost all the questions. The two questionnaires are discarded since they are poorly relevant. However, it is worth to entirely report two detailed commentaries that these farmers gave back with the filled-in questionnaire. The comments are reported at the end of this section.

As explained in the methodology, the questionnaire has the scope to discover which are the possible obstacles to the creation of a rural park in Sardinia, and whether the embeddedness is a sufficient condition to create effective synergies between AFNs, spatial planning and landscape protection projects. For this reason, the average numerical value given by farmers has been considered useful in order to see the general thought about the themes. The average is calculated in two ways and presented through radar diagrams: in the first, the themes are reported in descending order, considering the average score of both general and contextualised questions. This allows seeing the differences between topics. In the second, instead, questions are coupled, alternating general and contextualised terms, and the average is calculated for each question; this makes it easy to see whether differences occur between the same topic when presented in general terms (labelled 'G') and when contextualised within the territory where farmers develop their activity (labelled 'C'). The radar diagram has been considered since It has a good visual impact. Diagrams are shown in figure 17 and figure 18.

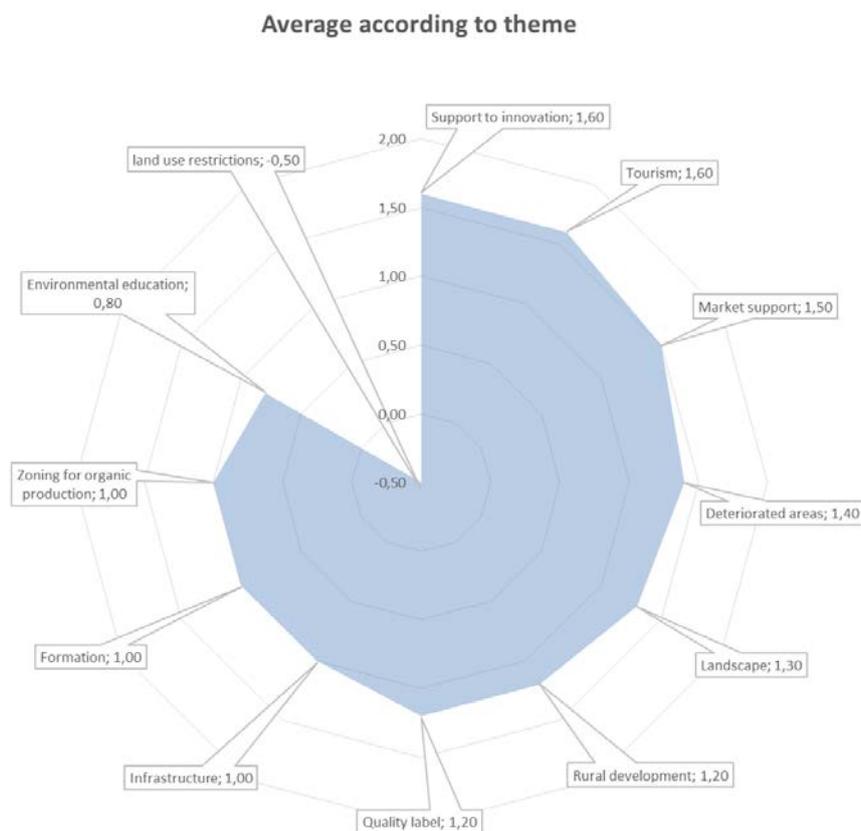


Figure 17: average according to themes. Source: author.

Themes can be divided into four sets, according to the average value: i) agree (more or equal to 1,50); ii) quite agree (between 1 and 1,5); iii) faintly agree (around 1); and iv) disagree (less than 0).

As it can be seen, in the first set themes with a strong focus on the business profit are included. The general questions related to these topics are the following:

- i) single farmers have difficulties to access innovative projects and in the accomplishment of new European and national regulations (score: 1,60);
- ii) rural tourism cannot be left to single farmers actions, but it needs actions in coordination between farmers and public administrations (score: 1,60);
- iii) the market competitiveness of farms can be favoured by planning measures that enhance the agricultural suitability of a territory (score: 1,50);

All these themes refer in some way to improvements that can benefit a single business; there is no sign of the concept of public good. Instead, this concept is enclosed in the second set of questions, where the landscape is mentioned as public good, and planning is shown as a measure for the improvement of a whole piece of land:

- iv) the creation of agricultural parks could recover abandoned and deteriorated areas, conferring to them a function directly connected to agriculture (score: 1,40);
- v) rural landscape, in its natural and artificial components, is a good belonging to the community; its management should be a task of to spatial planning (score: 1,30);
- vi) spatial planning actions, focused on rural areas, would generate an economic development for them (score: 1,20);
- vii) a quality label referring to a certain region, having different characteristics from the organic certification, would help the promotion of the product of a particular respondent farmer (score: 1,20).

In the third theme, the agreement of producers drop drastically in respect to the first; if infrastructure, formation and zoning rules have a 1 score, environmental education has a 0,80. As it is clearer from the second diagram, here farmers seem to perceive that some measures and actions should not be a task of the public bodies, but they can be developed by farmers if endowed with the right support. Questions relative to this third set are the following:

- i) rural and agricultural infrastructure (irrigation system networks, local roads) are a collective good and some of them are part of the landscape structure. For this reason, they should be managed at a higher level than the local (score: 1,00);
- ii) the creation of agricultural parks in some zones of Sardinia could support formation of those people who want to approach agriculture, and the upgrading of former producers (score: 1,00);

- iii) organic production would be supported by the bind of some zones to this practice, so as to reduce impacts deriving from adjacent conventional parcels (score: 1,00)
- iv) environmental and sustainable consumption education, as for example related to schools, is a task of the society and for this reason should be managed by public bodies (score: 0,80).

When asked about land use restrictions, all the farmers show disagreement:

- i) agricultural areas should be preserved through use limitations that avoid their urbanisation and the realisation of high-impact infrastructure (score: -0,50).

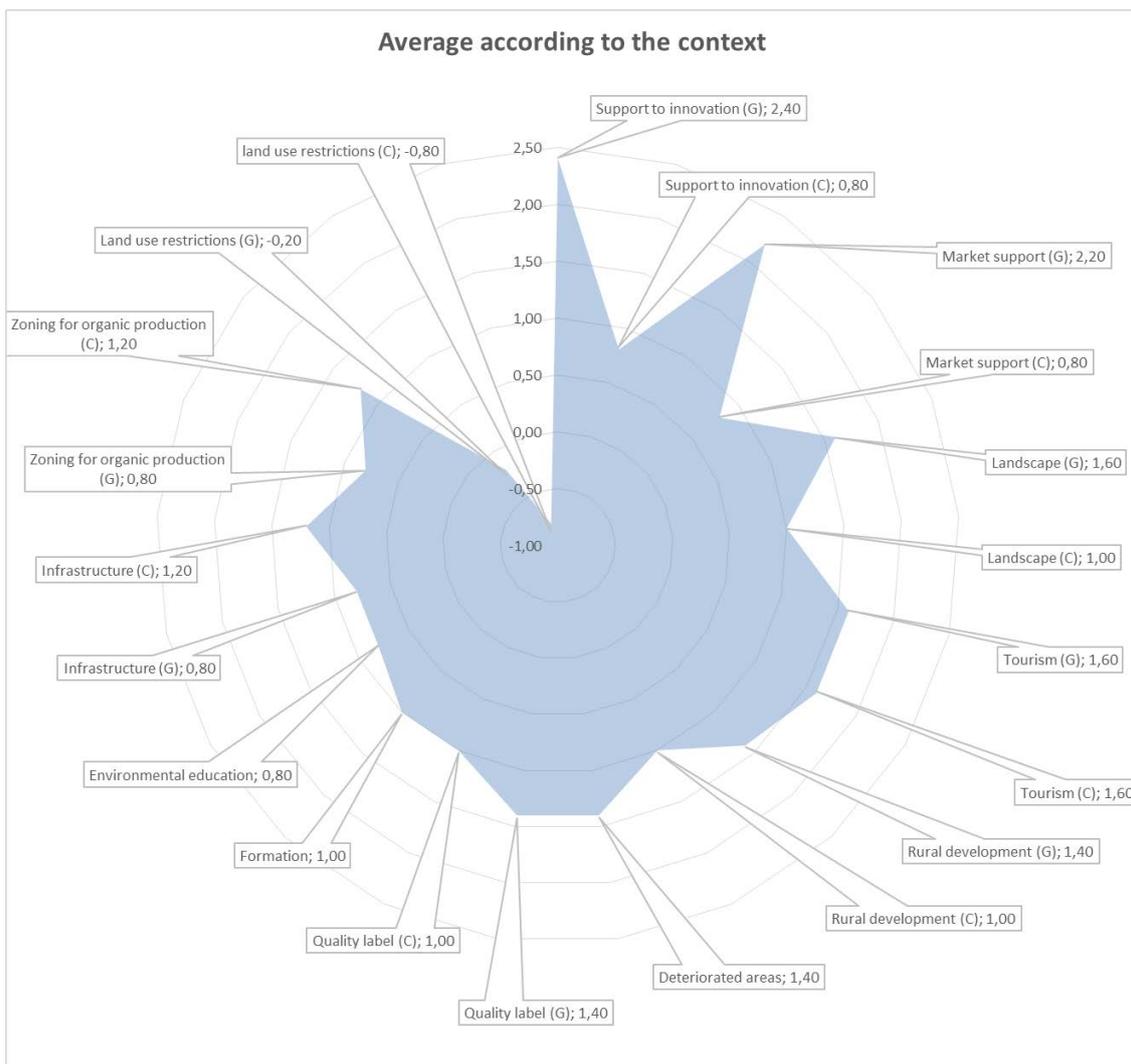


Figure 18: average punctuation for general and contextualised topics. Source: author.

The diagram showing the differences between general and contextualised themes reveals the interesting point of view of farmers. Many themes, when contextualised, drop their agreement score, with the exception of the zoning for organic production and infrastructure, and tourism that maintains the same score. The major drop can be seen in the themes of the first set (with the highest mean-value): support to innovation and market support. For the themes of the second set, rural development, landscape, and quality label, the

drop is less pronounced. Land use restrictions confirms the trend of the first diagram; if the general topic is close to 0 (-0,20), when contextualised drops to a -0,80. Within the contextualised questions, reference to agricultural parks occurs more frequently than in the general topics.

It is worth, now, reporting the commentaries of the farmers who filled in the questionnaire by indicating strong-agreement assessments only:

“in general, I put ‘I strongly agree’ to all the questions, because the proposed actions can be good to pursuit them. Owever, the problem is that if supra-local actions are, so to speak, imposed, they risk to generate a boomerang effect even they are right. We have many examples of these actions in Sardinia. In order to avoid these problems, tools for the valorisation of territories should be managed by the local societies by themselves, or through a collaboration [of administrations] with them. If regional government imposes, people oppose. For example, the regional administration is now encouraging the creation of PDO geographical indications that are not locally embedded due to their strong focus on macro-economic concepts. On the other hand, the regional administration could impose restrictions in certain zones. I have a different opinion. I believe that territorial cohesion should arise when actors are aware of it, and local administrations should facilitate the entire process of application of principles that characterise a rural region.

Despite this, in Orgosolo²² where nobody wants a Supramonte protected area within the Park of Gennargentu, the regional administration pushes to establish it, whereas Mamoiada²³, which wants to become a well-defined wine land, is not allowed to have a sub-zone for the Cannonau CDO. This is because having too many zones of production can generate confusion among consumers. Instead, the regional administration proposes to push more on a Sardinian label.

Hence, we need to assess what is real and not pursuing political ideas that very often are ideological, sometimes driven by envy and with no relationship with the local context.

Ideas you propose are good, but they must respect the involved actors, avoiding the risk of installing a local dictatorship. In Mamoiada we have realised a local association regarding wine; we have worked for fifteen years, but now the association accounts for ten wine cellars, and it has a procedural guideline based on organic production principles and a territorial label inspired to traditional agricultural practices. But, when possible, regional administration goes against us”.

The other farmer commented the questionnaire in the following way:

²² A small town in the province of Nuoro, in the centre of Sardinia, located in the Supramonte mountain chain, where a proposal for a national park encountered since the 90s a strong opposition by local population.

²³ Another town in the province of Nuoro, renowned for his wine production, where the farmer lives.

“the concept of rural park could solve some problems, but the main issue is the access to the profession of farmer, that is the possibility for people (especially young) to start cultivating and having a economically sustainable income. Today, this is not possible unless you own a big farm”.

Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Embeddedness: a comparison between Community of Madrid and Sardinia

The study shows how different driving forces work within AFNs, highlighting their complex nature and their different types of alterity, mainly working inside the capitalist market in order to change it with different intensities (Goodman, Dupuis, & Goodman, 2011). This variability is demonstrated by the influence of economy and other categories in the behavioural styles. Differences are relevant in order to understand future developments of the phenomenon, also with reference to the potential role of AFNs in the CAP. Indeed, until now, two agricultures have been coexisting within the CAP, in competition against each other: on the one hand, a commoditised and de-localised agriculture and, on the other hand, a multi-functional and rural development-oriented one (Goodman et al., 2011). As seen, even though the CAP 2014-2020 shows a little shift to multi-functional measures, both in the theoretical framework and in the total budget of the Policy, it produces scepticism about the effectiveness of multi-functional aspects, which could be just a façade justification for maintaining an actual neo-liberalism background (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2015). However, some elements of novelty that can match empirical evidences from this study can be put in evidence: i) the support to small farms; ii) the green direct payment for crop diversification; iii) the promotion of social aspects in rural zones; and, iv) the promotion of food chains organisation.

In relation to the latter aspect, the concept of *localness* as it appears in the two case studies deserves particular attention. Indeed, this concept is expressed differently in the two analysed realities; whereas in the Madrid region references to local conditions are linked to the theme of seeds and of restoring lost and antique varieties of plants, in Sardinia there is a strong relation with the promotion of the territory through its history and natural landscape. Without the aim of getting to an extreme vision, it could be interesting to reflect if this dichotomy can be somewhat linked to the dualism expressed at the European level by Fonte (2008) between the *reconnection* and *origin of food* perspectives, at least in farmers showing this behavioural style.

It is true that Fonte (2008) addresses the *reconnection perspective* to Northern European countries (Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden), while the *origin of food* perspective is typical of the Mediterranean basin. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Madrid is one of the largest cities in Europe, with a population of over 3 million people (Eurostat, 2015), and could have suffered globalisation effects more than Sardinia, which in total has a population of about 1,6 million people (ISTAT, 2014). In this sense, the Italian region has been “latecomer to industrial development” without completing the transition towards an industrialised, commoditised, and de-localised food system (Fonte, 2008). It is also true that farmers’ visions depend sometimes on the type of products; *re-localisers* link food history mainly referring to oil, wine and cheese, which need long-lasting and complex processing methods. On the other hand, almost all the Spanish farmers cultivate vegetables which do not need post-harvest work. Further research can eventually confirm if these

differences have geographical and social bases or not. However, one of the declared interests of this thesis is to discover if embeddedness among AFNs farmers exists in the two regions, and then to what extent they can be considered “new economic spaces” (Goodman et al, p. 17). Under this vision, it is very important to know that localness (and, ultimately, spatial embeddedness) has to be treated as a complex and multi-faceted concept, instead of a rigid category.

Moreover, it is interesting to consider the case of *Le strade del vino Cannonau* in the light of non-official certifications and innovation in market niches (Smith, 2006). This non-profit association is just an example of how AFNs continuously re-invent themselves in order to avoid and contrast the mainstream appropriation of their values (Goodman, Dupuis, & Goodman, 2011). PGS has been also mentioned by a Spanish and a Sardinian farmer as a holistic and fair system of certification; the inclusion of PGS values into these non-official channels could be useful in order to avoid the *local trap* (Born & Purcell, 2006) and assure the maintaining of social justice and equity.

5.2 Rural parks in Milan and Rivas-Vaciamadrid: which lessons can be learnt?

For the case study of the Parco Agricolo Sud, the study has analysed how websites of Environmental Quality Producer farms promote their activities, whether they create a link between quality of places and quality of food, and which values they use to explain this link.

Both in the number of references and in the way values are presented, there is evidence of the will of focusing on local history, regional heritage and traditions, and typical architecture, more than other characteristics. Food and places promotion through the websites can be included within the *origin of food* perspective, according to which the concept of localness goes beyond the spatial dimension, in order to include a complex set of common values related to the history and rural habits of the region where the food is produced (Fonte, 2008). If this is to be expected within the geo-historical knowledge category, which is significantly place-embedded in respect to the general use of *sweeping images* (Crang, 1996) that characterise conventional and globalised commodities (Morris & Kirwan, 2010), the study highlights farmers’ will of focusing on traditions and local values also when referring to the other types of knowledge. These values are conceived as cross-boarding ideas to promote territorial roots, thus aimed at reinforcing the notion of *terroir*, with its strong identity and set of common experiences and expertise (Bessière, 1998). As shown in the results, also biodiversity and water are related to history and perceived as part of the agricultural heritage of the region. Moreover, the notion of *terroir* is treated in the descriptions of products linking them to traditional Lombardy cuisine (e.g., for the rice).

A large use of personal biographies also emerges. These stories typically aim at giving to the farm a familiar dimension and build customer trust and confidence, thus being more market-oriented than the previous ones. The analysis also highlights the different purposes that characterise references to landscape under the

geo-historical and natural knowledge categories; in the first case, terroir and traditions are stressed, whereas in the second case the scope is clearly to shape an evocative image of the area in order to foster its tourist attractiveness.

More than being conceived as a marketing strategy in the classical sense, websites seem to accomplish very well the scope of the mark, trying to enhance the image of the Park and its farms.

The expressed values work in these two directions, i.e. promoting the traditional landscape in its enlarged, cultural-oriented sense according to the ELC (quality of places), and the alternative way of working of the farms (quality of products and production).

Although the results are partial and require integrations, for example by qualitative interviews to farmers, the analysis highlights that the connection between the quality of food and the quality of places work in synergy through the different uses of the four kinds of knowledge, which can emphasize both the terroir characteristics and the quality of farms. If a marketing strategy exists, it is for sure not only related to the products (as they were just commodities), but also to the enhancement of the image of the place where the farms develop their business, i.e. the Park. The mark, with its required accomplishment of environmental actions, is an effective tool in building connections between the farm and the landscape scales according to Lefebvre et al. (2014), and its innovative and successful characteristic stands in the fact that it creates some conditions typical of collective actions (Brunori & Rossi, 2000). If the Park dimension, on one side, influences those actions that are out of a single individual's power (as for example landscape fruition and recreation), on the other side single farms, through the four kinds of knowledge, support the development of a Park image based on the promotion of the re-connection between food and place of production.

In policy terms, the website analysis reflects the strong inter-sectorial dimension that characterises the regional and local approach to food. Not only food appears as the result of the history and traditions of the region, thus being recognised as a fundamental driver to particularise its economy, reach competitive advantages and to foster its touristic attractiveness; but also represents a valuable tool to pursue an overall improvement of the quality of landscape and environment, and for preservation of local balances and biodiversity, thus contributing to a more sustainable development model, in line with the EU 2020 goals.

Thus, the Park represents a good example of the capacity to combine products and places qualification, with local branding strategies. The design of an integrated policy framework - focusing not only on actions to promote isolated excellences, but also bringing together various instruments in a holistic approach - could represent the main on-going challenge at the regional and local levels. Indeed, it would create synergies between the existing measures and funding opportunities, as a primary condition for the development of both new environmental-oriented food policies and sustainable agricultural landscape planning.

In the Spanish case, results show that interviews and websites contents match very well the heterogeneity of the Park goals; the influence of cultural and socio-economic factors in agricultural production is recognised as important for biodiversity conservation (Simoncini, 2015). Furthermore, taking into account the considerations of Primdahl (1999), the case study seems to go beyond the problems generated by the separation between landowners and farmers. Although they use to cultivate parcels of municipal land, interviewees did not show a strong productivist behaviour. Rather, they express the willing of practising measures related to environmental protection and landscape improvement. In this context it is not important to know whether the Park principles influence farmers' behaviour or, perhaps, there is evidence of an influence of the socio-economic context in farm design (Lovell, et al., 2010).

Other issues have also emerged, for example the lack of cultivated vegetable variety. This could be a hindrance for the biodiversity improvement, in addition to the excess of concurrency highlighted by the farmer who spoke about this. A possible solution could be a stronger planning action by the park administration, for example by dedicating some parcels to specific cultivations.

On the other hand, the link between the park and the monthly farmers' market is another example of synergy. The market is an indirect promotion of the Park and its label quality that helps reaching goals of health, nutrition, and localness. It is a way to make people conscious about food provenance, and a place where relationships with farmers could be established. Said that, a guarantee system in which landscape protection and environmental matters are strongly taken into account, does it emerge from the analysis.

In both cases, it is clear the role of the planning system (the Park regulations) in orientating agricultural practices towards landscape and land-use goals. This orientation is realised through traditional planning tools (e.g., zoning and restrictions), but also with innovative methods, such as the Environmental Quality Producer mark; indeed, as seen, this label does not certifies the quality of products, but it promotes the Park and its multifunctional nature. The help given to the farms in promoting their products has its counterpart in the environmental and landscape objectives, making a synergy between ecological embeddedness and economic goals. The mark Fresh Product from Soto del Grillo Agroecological Park plays a similar role together with the monthly farmers' market. Even though they do not explicitly promote the park, they realises this goal in practice; indeed, the ultimate effect is the economic sustainability of farms having the responsibility to maintain the zone in good ecological conditions. The mandatory enrolment of farmers in organic certification is an efficient inclusion of practices that are not considered by the existing official labels. This inclusion can be seen as an efficient way of integrating the different landscape management scales, as a partial solution to the problem posed by Lefebvre et al. (2014), if spread to tools different from only certification.

The study cannot demonstrate whether the forms of embeddedness are generated or boosted by the inclusion within a rural park; however, it is true that no farmers included in the market niche group belong to the park. Thus, ecological and social values as components of the embeddedness typical of AFNs should

be used in context analysis as well as in the design and management of rural planning activities, especially when the scope is to protect and improve agricultural landscape through multifunctional agriculture. The existence of intrinsic values that support activities not strictly related to food production should be studied carefully and analysed in order to make efficient regulatory tools and innovative instruments, such as non-official certifications as in the two case studies. This would definitely overtake the vision of agricultural landscape as mere by-products of agricultural practices (Busck, 2002). Participation of farmers in planning practice is also important, because “development of the agricultural landscape is still, to a large extent, dependent on farmers’ decision-making” (Busck, 2002, p. 247). In particular, for the case of the Parco Agricolo Sud, it is clear the potential role that the Park has in compensating for the missing indications of RDPs concerning the criteria for the conservation of historical and cultural values of Italian rural landscapes (Branduini, 2010). Moreover, a participatory approach, that takes into account of how farmers manage the driving forces of their behaviour, could solve the problem of policies and support measures that until now have shown a low efficiency due to their sectorial approach. This approach neither takes into account the multifunctionality of agriculture, nor conflicts between agriculture production and local situations (Ferretto, 2010).

Integration of embeddedness and planning activities could be beneficial to consumers, too. The already mentioned farmers’ market in Rivas-Vaciamadrid and the tourist fruition of the Parco Agricolo Sud are examples of reconnection of the cities and the countryside, where the three forms of embeddedness play a fundamental role in education to consumption, both from the environmental and social points of view. If planning can integrate landscape and environmental values into farmers’ embeddedness, by the four dimensions defined by Morris & Kirwan (2011), the consumers’ behaviour would be modified, starting from the understanding dimension, in order to reach a suitable negotiating dimension. Moreover, purchasing activities would be more oriented to the environment (since they only are focused on health aspects, in some farmers’ opinion), towards the building of an *ecological citizenship* (Seyfang, 2006).

5.3 Likert questionnaires and conclusions concerning Sardinia

Although Likert questionnaires do not have statistical significance, they provide useful information in order to discover which are the forces contrasting the creation of rural parks. In fact, it is clear that every interviewee shows a major agreement with the general than with the contextualised questions. Public intervention is considered more necessary for economic activities (interviewees’ support to innovation and marketing) than for environment and landscape protection, and the agreement drops considerably if the intervention is addressed to the specific territory where farms are located. Strong economic focus could be associated to the insufficient organisation of farmers’ markets in the region; the two existing farmers’ markets represent only a 1.7% of the Italian total (Meloni, et al., 2009), and they are managed by farmers’

associations. A lack of an official regulation by the regional administration for these forms of selling is highlighted by Galisai, et al. (2009).

Questions about environment and landscape rank second in the radar diagram (figure 17). Moreover, the questions related to planning tools as to land-use restrictions and zoning drastically drop to very low scores. This drop shows a mistrust for these tools in specific territorial contexts, which is well explained by the farmer's opinion about the up-down approach that the regional administration has assumed during the years. As a consequence, future planning practices should take carefully into account participation of local communities, with the double goal of implementing real effective initiatives that consider concrete issues and of avoiding authoritative measures. Participation would be useful also to explain the potential that an organised rural area can derive from the tourist point of view, in so presenting a possible solution to the scarce attitude to consumers in visiting farms, and the consequent lack of direct selling within the farm (Galisai, et al., 2009). Indeed, if this lack does not represent a big issue for vegetable and fruit producers, breeders suffer from the economic burden expenses generated by installing processing and commercialisation lines within the farms (Dettori, Gosamo, & Sanna, 2010). In conclusion, Likert questionnaires seem to confirm that even though ecological embeddedness strongly influences farmers' behaviours, it does not imply a positive attitude towards public management of agricultural activity as a factor influencing landscape conservation. Nevertheless, embeddedness helps to deeply understand the driving forces at work in a territory, by distinguishing among the environmental and social context, and analysing how these contexts work together.

Annexes

Annex A: Spanish interview

Content and aim: I am conducting a scientific research about Alternative food Networks (AFNs) and organic agriculture in the Community of Madrid. AFNs developed as an alternative to conventional food chain, with the scope of shortening the distance between producers and consumers, establishing a trusty relationship related to food quality. In particular, the interview tries to discover farmers' point of view, the reasons that push them to be part of an AFN, the pros and cons of organic production and of choosing alternative distribution channels. Finally, it is scope of the interview to discover the ideas and behaviour of farmers towards the environment.

Interview structure: the interview is divided into three sections. In the first, general information about farms and their business management is asked. The second is related to production methods and to how farmers take into account the environment within their activity of organic farming. The third is focused on the belonging to any type of AFN and its advantages and disadvantages respect to conventional food chains.

Information use: the participation to this research is completely volunteer; collected data and information will be used only for academic scopes.

I agree with the terms and conditions

Interview

Block 1: general information and business structure

1. Personal data

Name		Surname 1		Surname 2	
Date of birth					

2. Localisation:

3. Business type

Enterprise

Familiar

Other

4. Products:

5. Number of employees:

6. Cultivated surface:

7. Start-up year:

BLOCK 2: Production methods

8. Despite the CAEM obligations, which are in your opinion the methods that characterise organic farming, and why? Can you make a comparison between organic and conventional products?

9. Does the enrolment to the CAEM have some cons? Could you suggest some improvement?

10. Which are the pros of organic production respect to the conventional one?
11. If you were not enrolled to the CAEM, would you choose practising organic farming anyway? Why?
12. Do you think your farming methods play a role in the environmental protection? How?

BLOCK 3: Selling and distribution methods

13. Why in your opinion people buy your products? Which are the characteristics that make your products worth to be bought?
14. How do you sell your products?
15. Have you always used these forms of selling?
 - Yes (go to question 18)
 - No (go to question 16)
16. You answer to question 13 was NO. How did you use to sell your products before?
17. Why did you change your selling methods?
18. In your opinion, which are the pros and cons of your selling methods respect to the conventional distribution channels?
19. How do promote your farm?
20. Could you name someone I can interview?

Annex B: Sardinia interview for alternative farmers

Content and aim: I am conducting a scientific research about Alternative food Networks (AFNs) and organic agriculture in Sardinia. AFNs developed as an alternative to conventional food chain, with the scope of shortening the distance between producers and consumers, establishing a trusty relationship related to food quality. In particular, the interview tries to discover farmers' point of view, the reasons that push them to be part of an AFN, the pros and cons of organic production and of choosing alternative distribution channels. Finally, it is scope of the interview to discover the ideas and behaviour of farmers towards the environment.

Interview structure: the interview is divided into three sections. In the first, general information about farms and their business management is asked. The second is related to production methods and to how farmers take into account the environment within their activity of organic farming. The third is focused on the belonging to any type of AFN and its advantages and disadvantages respect to conventional food chains.

Information use: the participation to this research is completely volunteer; collected data and information will be used only for academic scopes.

I agree with the terms and conditions

Interview

Block 1: general information and business structure

1. Personal data

Name		Surname 1			
Date of birth					

2. Localisation:

3. Business type

Enterprise

Familiar

Other

4. Products:

5. Number of employees:

6. Cultivated surface:

7. Start-up year:

BLOCK 2: Production methods

8. Despite the organic obligations, which are in your opinion the methods that characterise organic farming, and why? Can you make a comparison between organic and conventional products?

9. Which are the pros of organic production respect to the conventional one?

10. Are you enrolled to a certification body? If yes, go to question 11, else go to question 14.
11. Does the enrolment to the CAEM have some pros?
12. Does the enrolment to the CAEM have some cons? Could you suggest some improvement? (Go to question 16)
13. If you were not enrolled to organic certification, would you choose practising organic farming anyway? Why?
14. Do you think that being enrolled in a certification body would have additional pros for you? Why?
15. Why have you chosen to practise organic farming without the certification?
16. Do you think your farming methods play a role in the environmental protection? How?
17. Can you make a comparison between organic and conventional products?

BLOCK 3: Selling and distribution methods

18. How do you sell your products?
19. Have you always used these forms of selling?
 - Yes (go to question 18)
 - No (go to question 16)
20. You answer to question 13 was NO. How did you use to sell your products before?
21. Why did you change your selling methods?
22. In your opinion, which are the pros and cons of your selling methods respect to the conventional distribution channels?
23. Why in your opinion people buy your products? Which are the characteristics that make your products worth to be bought?
24. How do promote your farm?
25. Could you name someone I can interview?

Annex C: Sardinia interview for conventional farmers

Content and aim: I am conducting a scientific research about Alternative food Networks (AFNs) and organic agriculture in Sardinia. AFNs developed as an alternative to conventional food chain, with the scope of shortening the distance between producers and consumers, establishing a trusty relationship related to food quality. In particular, the interview tries to discover farmers' point of view, the reasons that push them to be part of an AFN, the pros and cons of organic production and of choosing alternative distribution channels. Finally, it is scope of the interview to discover the ideas and behaviour of farmers towards the environment.

Interview structure: the interview is divided into three sections. In the first, general information about farms and their business management is asked. The second is related to production methods and to how farmers take into account the environment within their activity of organic farming. The third is focused on the belonging to any type of AFN and its advantages and disadvantages respect to conventional food chains.

Information use: the participation to this research is completely volunteer; collected data and information will be used only for academic scopes.

I agree with the terms and conditions

INTERVIEW

Block 1: general information and business structure

1. Personal data

Name		Surname 1			
Date of birth					

2. Localisation:

3. Business type

Enterprise

Familiar

Other

4. Products:

5. Number of employees:

6. Cultivated surface:

7. Start-up year:

BLOCK 2: Production methods

1. Which are the methods that distinguish conventional and organic farming?

2. In your opinion, which are the aspects that make preferable to continue practising conventional farming respect to converting to organic production?

3. How your production methods have impacts on ecological condition of your farm?
4. Speaking about pesticides and/or synthetic fertilisers: their use is justified a priori or in some cases it is preferable, as much as possible, to use natural methods?
5. Can you make a comparison between organic and conventional products?

BLOCK 3: Selling and distribution methods

6. How do you try to transmit to customers the values with which you practise agriculture?
7. How do you sell your products?
8. Have you always used these forms of selling?
 Yes (go to question 11)
 No (go to question 19)
9. You answer to question 8 was NO. How did you use to sell your products before?
10. Why did you change your selling methods?
11. In your opinion, which are the pros and cons of your selling methods respect to the conventional distribution channels?
12. In your opinion, which is the best way to transmit the added value(s) of products sold within AFNs respect to the conventional chains, so as to more people could start this new style of consumption?
13. How do promote your farm?

Annex D: Likert questionnaire for Sardinian farmers

1. Spatial planning activities paying more attention to agricultural regions would represent an economic development for the rural world.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

2. Rural landscape, with its natural and artificial components, is a public good and its management should be up to spatial planning.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

3. Market integration and single farms competitiveness can be favoured by planning activities that stress agricultural suitability of a certain territory.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

4. Rural tourism cannot be up to single producers, but needs coordinated actions between farmers and public administrations.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

5. Single farmers do not have broad access to innovative projects and to new national and EU regulations compliance.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

6. Rural park creation could recover degraded or abandoned zones, conferring upon them the function of supporting agriculture (directly or indirectly).

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

7. Society has the responsibility to educate to environmental respect and to sustainable consumption (for example within schools), thus this activity is up to public administrations.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

8. Agrarian and rural infrastructure (irrigation systems, local roads) are public goods and some of them are part of the landscape. Thus, they should be managed at a supra-local level.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

9. A quality label for a territory, with different characteristics from those of the organic certification, would help the commercialisation of my products.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

10. The creation of rural parks in some zones of Sardinia would support the formation of people who want to insert them into the agricultural sector, and the updating those who already work in the sector.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

11. Agricultural areas should be preserved through land-use restrictions in order to avoid their urbanisation and realisation of high environmental impact infrastructure.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

12. Organic agriculture practice would be enhanced by dedicating vast areas to it, so as to reducing impacts deriving from adjacent conventional cultivations.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

13. I think that a rural park could be enhance the agricultural suitability of the territory where my farm is located.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

14. I think that a rural park in my territory would be useful for the protection and the enhancement of the rural landscape.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

15. My farm would benefit from spatial planning actions that, through territorial restrictions and production orientations, with the participation of producers, can generate useful synergies to be competitive within the market.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

16. A multifunctional rural park that integrates production and public fruition could boost rural tourism in my territory.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

17. As a farmer, I would benefit from belonging to a public organisation that gives orientations and suggestions on how to keep pace with new regulations.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

18. In my territory a planning action for rural infrastructure would be needed.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

19. If my farm were located within a rural park with its own quality label, my products would acquire more visibility.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

20. Making restrictions for the rural zones of my territory would be useful in order to avoid urbanisation or new infrastructure creation.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

21. I think that is a good thing to make restrictions for some areas of my territory in order to dedicate them to organic and/or sustainable agriculture.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

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